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GOD, THE FATHER.

BY

REV. ANDREW P. PEABODY. D.D.

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GOD, THE FATHER.

BY A. P. PEABODY, D.D.

THE Hebrew Scriptures uniformly represent God as one, undivided, self-existent, eternal; as personally and consciously the Creator, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe; as infinite in power, knowledge, and wisdom; as extending his providential government to all beings and objects; and as kind and benignant to his chosen people. That Jesus Christ sanctions and confirms the previously existing belief in the personality of the Supreme Being, and in his essential attributes, no Christian denies or doubts. We maintain, that he equally sanctions and confirms the undivided unity of God. He certainly does not claim for himself participation in the Godhead: for he repeatedly prays to the Father; he expressly says, "I can of mine own self do nothing;" and, as regards his authority as Head of the Church founded by his toil, suffering, and death, he affirms, "All power *is given* unto me in heaven and in earth." Nor is there any thing in his teachings which would indicate the Holy Spirit as a divine person. The word which designates *spirit* in the original of the New Testament is a neuter noun; it is always connected with the neuter of the article, of adjectives, and of pronouns; and there seems to us no reason to doubt that the "Holy Spirit" de-

notes the influence of God upon the soul of man, whether exerted directly, through Christ, or in and through the course of nature and of providence.

But, in addition to all that had been taught and believed before, Jesus Christ declared the fatherhood of God; and, among our grounds of gratitude to him, none can take precedence of the revelation implied in the simple words, "Our Father." The divine paternity has, indeed, its evidence in all nature and in all providence: were it not so, it could not be true; and now that we have learned it from Christ, we can verify it in the outward creation and in human experience. But it is one thing to verify, quite another to discover truth. Before Christ came, the fatherhood of God formed a part of no philosophy and of no religion, except so far as the Hebrews thought Jehovah their Father, but filled with enmity and hatred to their enemies, and to the Gentiles in general.

Indeed, God's paternal relation to all men could not, from the very nature of things, be discovered or reasoned out prior to revelation, nor can it now be verified without our resort to its adjunct truth,—the immortality of man. For the divine household is too large, and the cycles of its administration are too extended, for us to trace out its principles, till Jesus puts into our hands the telescope with which we may sweep the universe, and pierce the depths of eternity. In any narrower view there are exceptions, hard cases, seeming inequalities, uncompensated evils and miseries, so numerous as to present a fearful offset to the evidences of the divine benignity and mercy, and to give no little plausibility to the old Oriental dualism, which, in a modified form, still lingers in the lap of Christendom,—the belief in two semi-omnipotent principles, Ormuzd and Ahriman, the good and the evil genius, God and the devil. Take away the Christian revelation, we might,

in the flush of youth and joy and hope, feel that we were under a fatherly providence ; but we should hardly feel so did we stand by the lifeless form of our best beloved, did we survive the hopeless wreck of our earthly fortunes, or were we wasted by disease, or racked with chronic suffering. We might feel, that over our happy homes, and our prosperous condition, Omnipotent Love reigned. But, while we write, it may be, there is on some track of the deep a ship's company perishing in night and storm ; the agonizing cry goes up from hundreds of imperilled souls ; one by one they are swept from their last convulsive hold ; and the remorseless billowswhelm in their fathomless grave the tumultuous, eager, buoyant life, that but yesterday swarmed on the deck with not a thought of danger. Is Omnipotent Love there also ? And is it with the prisoner and the slave, with the starving mendicant, with the multitudes that live as the brutes live, and die as the brutes die, without God and without hope ? It is, we believe,—we see, when Christ has opened our eyes,—when we learn from him the disciplinary ministry of every form of outward evil, and learn, too, that this ministry, if not consummated on earth, has ample scope in heaven and eternity.

But Jesus has done much more than to declare dogmatically the divine fatherhood. His words are, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." In his more than motherly compassion and tenderness, in his genial sympathy with the grief-stricken, in his pleading love for the sinner, in his open arms for the despised and rejected of men, in his miracles of divine mercy, in that greatest miracle of all,—his redemption-sacrifice on the cross,—he has exhibited not only the sincerity and depth of his own love, but equally the intensity of God's love for his human family ; and none can look upon Christ as the image of

God, without feeling the fatherly goodness of the Almighty more profoundly than our poor human speech, nay, even as its words fell from the Saviour's lips, can utter it.

Without attempting to develop a truth so simple that it is defined in its very statement, yet so vast that, were we to undertake its illustration in detail, "even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written," let us draw from it such inferences as we may most need for instruction and warning, comfort and encouragement.

1. The fatherhood of God answers the oft-mooted question of the efficacy of prayer. The entire truth on this subject is comprehended in our Saviour's words, "What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? or, if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him!" Where the relation between the father and the child is what it ought to be, the child's prayer **or** request to the father is always efficacious. There is an efficacy in the very intercourse between them. If the child goes to his father in all his needs and wants, doubts and perplexities, whatever there is in the father of strength, wisdom, spiritual resource, is proffered for the child's benefit. There is a perpetual outflow from the elder and stronger spirit, for the support and guidance of the younger and feebler. Thus must it be as the soul rises into filial communion with the Father in heaven. Prayer is its own fulfilment. The infinite fulness of the Divine Mind is poured into the praying soul, till its weakness becomes strength; its ignorance, wisdom; its poverty, wealth.

Let us now consider the case of prayer for specific temporal blessings. The son may ask his father for gifts which would be equally his without the asking; but, in

that case, they are worth to him immeasurably more as tokens of his father's love, are enjoyed with the zest given to them by a grateful heart, and have a moral and spiritual value over and above their outward uses. Again, he may ask for gifts, which the father, in his superior wisdom, knows would be to his injury; and, in that case, the request is more than granted when denied, since the denial ministers to his true good, while the conferment would do him harm. But yet, again, he undoubtedly receives, in consequence of asking, gifts, indulgences, and favors, which, unasked, would not be bestowed: and this, because the judicious father knows that many things may be healthfully and profitably enjoyed by his son, when received at his hand, and enjoyed under his eye, which, otherwise obtained, he would abuse to his own detriment; and also because the father loves to recognize and reward the child-heart which rejoices in its dependence on parental kindness.

To apply this analogy to our relation to our Father in heaven, we will first suppose that the outward lot of him who prays is precisely the same as if he did not pray. Still we maintain that his prayer is efficacious; for, from gifts which yield to the undevout only pleasurable sensations, he derives an inward gladness as far beyond that animal pleasure, as man transcends the brute in nature and in destiny. His joy in them is gratitude. His use of them is worship. As the keepsake of a dear friend, as the memorial of a friend in heaven never seems to us the material object that it is, but is transfigured to the inward eye; so are these outward gifts of God by prayer transmuted into spiritual objects, endowed with spiritual associations, and made as truly the soul's nourishment and property as are the unembodied thoughts of peace that flow directly from the Divine Spirit. But—as in the

earthly relation of parent and child — the prayer for temporal blessings is often most truly answered, when in form denied: for, on the one hand, we may ask what, if granted, would be injurious to our spiritual welfare; and, on the other hand, we may be disciplined by privation and suffering for higher attainments in goodness than could else be ours. At the same time, it is entirely conceivable that outward blessings may, in the not infrequent course of the divine administration, be bestowed, as the common phrase is, in answer to prayer. Not that God, asked or unasked, will bestow what were best withholden, or withhold what were best given: but specific gifts may be real blessings to the devout soul, when, because asked in prayer, they will be received with praise, and made means of spiritual growth or enlarged usefulness; while the very same gifts bestowed on an unthankful heart would have rendered earthiness more earthly, and selfishness more selfish.

But here comes the common, yet shallow objection, Can we hope to change the counsels of the Almighty by our prayers? I answer unhesitatingly, No. And equally little can we change his counsels by our industry and enterprise. Yet God, in his providence, usually rewards industry and enterprise. Is it any more surprising that he should reward that highest form of industry by which the soul sustains communion with its Author,— that noblest enterprise by which man scales the azure steps that lead up to the sapphire throne? If God, in his administration of earthly affairs, has reference to man's foreseen diligence and thrift, may he not equally have reference to his foreseen devotion? If he ordains that his children shall generally have the goods that they toil for, may he not also ordain that they shall sometimes have the goods that they pray for?

2. The fatherhood of God is full of comfort and encour-

agement for all who mean and strive to do their duty as his children. If God be our Father, then every one who sincerely desires and endeavors to do right ought to feel entire assurance of his favor, both in this world and in the world to come. It is a singular anomaly, that those who are most solicitous about their future salvation are almost always the very persons who have the least ground for such solicitude. There are not a few gentle, virtuous, devout, loving souls, that are weighed down by the fear that they may fall short of the heavenly inheritance ; that, in the day when God shall make up his jewels, they will be thrown aside ; that, when the guests are gathered in for the celestial banquet, they will be left in the outer darkness. Sometimes they are oppressed by an exaggerated view of their own faultiness, a microscopic conscience magnifying infirmities into sins ; unintentional failures, into grave transgressions ; foibles, incident to poor human nature, and which they are striving against and overcoming, into offences too heinous ever to be forgiven. Sometimes they are perplexed by the diversity of creeds and forms among Christians. They believe, but fear that they believe amiss. They worship, but fear that their devotion is not according to the prescribed pattern. Or there are mysteries in religion which they cannot probe, dark sayings in Scripture which they cannot interpret, seeming contradictions which they cannot reconcile. Or their fellow-Christians say to them, " Unless you see with our eyes, and assent to our creed, and worship in our forms, you cannot be saved ; " and they are distressed and despondent, because what they are assured is sacred truth and duty is not made clear to them.

This state of feeling is best met by considering what is implied when we call God our Father. The very least that can be meant is, that God's love resembles that of the

most tender and loving of human fathers, differing from it only in immeasurably transcending it. Now, does a father, worthy of the name, ever regard otherwise than with favor and kindness the child that sincerely desires to obey and please him? Is not all that he can give and do—his whole heart, and every blessing that with his heart he can bestow—lavished on such a child? Does he look severely on the child's unwilling mistakes, or regretted failures, or unavoidable ignorance, doubt, or perplexity? If the child does not fully comprehend his wishes, yet means and endeavors to fulfil them, is he angry or displeased? Does he not hold in the dearest esteem the tender child-heart; the trembling, longing desire to do right; the fear lest there be any neglect, omission, or failure? And has the Father of us all less regard and love for the child who earnestly desires his favor, endeavors to do all that he knows to be commanded, and longs to know more and to do better? Can he who loves us all better than we can love ourselves frown on unwilling ignorance or unwilling failures? Or can we imagine that he chooses his favorites among the sincere and honest of one sect or creed alone, and launches the bolts of his keen displeasure against the equally sincere and honest, who cannot reconcile the dogmas of that sect with reason and Scripture?—that he has permitted ambiguities and mysteries to hang over his truth, as to the finite mind they must ever hang over infinite truth, and then punishes his children because they cannot define with perfect precision the things which the angels desire in vain to look into? Is this fatherly? Does it accord with any conception which we can attach to the relation of a father to his child? Would not the human father, who dealt thus with his child, show himself utterly unworthy of that dear name and office? How, then, can we cherish such fears with reference to our Father in

heaven? Reader, have thoughts like these disturbed your peace, and clouded your hope? Go on, calmly and trustingly, doing the duty that you know, and asking daily "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" embracing the truth that is clear to you, and praying, "What I know not teach thou me;" and, if there be mysteries unrevealed, be content till a stronger light shall make them plain, or till "the great teacher, Death," shall expound them.

3. The fatherhood of God has a very different voice for the willing transgressor of his laws. The disobedient, vicious son cuts himself loose from his father; and this the more entirely, the more virtuous and devout the father is. His first wrong steps alienate him from his home, if it be a pure home; for its pervading spirit is no longer congenial with his spirit. He seeks his guilty pleasures away from home, and would fain hide them from his father's cognizance. His father loves him still, but cannot do him good cannot safely grant him the indulgences and favors which he would only abuse; and endeavors, if it be in his power to reclaim him by rebuke, privation, and punitive discipline. He loves him still, but no longer with the love of complacency or approbation. He loves him still, yet may be compelled to close against him the home which he would only defile and desecrate.

Can it be otherwise with our Father in heaven? Can he, who is purity and holiness, regard with approval or favor his willingly recusant and disobedient child? Can there be place for that child among the loyal and virtue-loving members of his household? Nay, can the child himself desire such a place? Would heaven be heaven to him? Would he accept its society, its work, its joy, if offered to him? The society, work, and joy that on earth are most heavenly, he now finds unattractive, and keeps as far from them as he can. In the world to come, we see

not how he can do otherwise — even if banished by no arbitrary decree, overtaken by no formal infliction of punishment — than to seek out “his own place,” among his own moral kindred, though there remain for him only the torturing memory of what he once enjoyed, of the life whose misused resources are lost to him for ever.

Guilt, in its very essence, in the very nature of things, is suicidal. It cannot be enduringly happy under the divine government. Its happiness is an impossibility of the same order with those self-contradictory mathematical propositions which we see at a glance to be absurd. The theory maintained by some, according to which the bad man wakes from the death-slumber to find himself a saint in heaven, is not even a false form of the belief in immortality: it implies not immortality, but the destruction of identity, the annihilation of the being that was, and the creation of an entirely new existence,— a belief which lacks the sanction equally of reason and of revelation.

Let it not, then, be imagined, that, because God is the Father of all, it must be well with the wicked. Let no quarter be given to the easy feeling with which many yield themselves to seducing evil, saying, “God is good, and all must at last be well with me, whatever I do.” Precisely because God is good, because he is the Father of all, must those who spurn the law, forego the blessings, of his household. The child who abjures a child’s duties cannot by any possibility enjoy the immunities and privileges that appertain to him as a child. God is good,— God is our Father; but to those who obey their appetites and passions, and scorn his commandments, he virtually says, “I have not forsaken you; but ye have forsaken me, — ye have forsaken your own mercies. Ye hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord. Ye would none of my counsel; ye despised all my reproof. There-

“Ye shall ye eat of the fruit of your own way, and be filled with your own devices.”

4. But, while the fatherhood of God gives neither shelter nor hope for transgression and guilt wantonly persisted in, it holds forth only hope and promise to the penitent, however profound may have been their need of pardon. What a touching, yet not overdrawn, picture of a human father’s love for his unworthy but now repenting son is given us in our Lord’s parable of the prodigal! The moment the child says, “I will arise, and go to my father,” the father is on his way to meet him; the day becomes a gala-day; the whole family are bidden to keep high festival, and the best that the house has is made ready for his welcome home. Such has been the scene enacted in unnumbered instances, in which the dead in sin has been rendered back to life, and turned his long truant steps toward the home which he had filled with sorrow. And can less love, less readiness to forgive, a tardier welcome, await him who has forsaken, but would now resume, the service and obedience of the Father in heaven? No, reader: whatever may have been your wrong or your guilt, your contrite sighs, your new resolutions of loyal duty, reverse your relation to your Father, restore you to a child’s place in his household, re-instate you in his approval and favor, and in the blessings more precious than life that flow from his favor. If you have gone but a little way, have just entered on those forms of guilty indulgence or action which alienate you from the love of God, return, while the way back is near and easy; while there need remain hanging about your renewed obedience no heavy, weary burden of remorse, and no retarding force of indurated habit to impede and imperil your progress Godward and heavenward. If you have wandered long and far, still hope in God, your Father; and let that hope give you a

power of self-recovery which else is not in you. Believe that— while the force of habit and association is constantly rendering your return more and more difficult, and your good resolutions may be too late for your waning strength of will and of spirit — you yet cannot have gone astray too far or too long for your Father to receive you, and for all heaven to rejoice over you, when it is said of you, “This your brother was dead, and is alive again ; and was lost, and is found.”

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BY

REV. WILLIAM G. ELIOT, D.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

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CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD.

BY W. G. ELIOT, D.D.

"Though I bear record of myself, my record is true; for I know whence I came, and whither I go." — JOHN viii. 14.

RESTING confidently in the belief that Jesus is a teacher come from God, we stand upon what may be called distinctively Christian ground. Not that we mean to deny the Christian name to those who reject the supernatural element in revelation; but it is evident that there is a broad distinction here which we are compelled to recognize. However excellent the Christian system may be, so long as it fails in the claim to divine authority, Christianity can be no more to us than the best among the "philosophies" of the world. If all stand upon the same level of authority, we select one or other of them, according to our best judgment. The sole authority, after all, would be in our own minds. But when we have once admitted that Jesus came from God; that he was inspired by the Divine Spirit, to reveal the truth and the will of God; that "he spake with authority," and not as the philosophers and scribes,—we are removed from the school of speculation to that of discipleship. We become learners, to sit at the feet of Jesus,—we look to him for the words of eternal life. The whole realm of theological inquiry is still before us; but there is an authority of final appeal. When we know

what Jesus taught, whether in precept or doctrine, it becomes to us the rule of our lives, the law of our thoughts.

I am not able, in this respect, to see any half-way ground. However much we may dispute concerning the instructions of Christ, we cannot dispute, after we have once admitted his divine mission, as to our duty in receiving and obeying his words. Perhaps it is here, and not in disputed doctrines, that the radical difference is found, indicated by the modern use of the word Evangelical. Unless the word is used merely for sectarian exclusiveness, as the Shibboleth of a party, the evangelical Christian is one who accepts the Evangel, or gospel, of Jesus Christ, as the authority, the final appeal, in matters of faith and practice. They who refuse to do this must regard Jesus merely as a human teacher, and, although they may call him "The Christ," may be still looking for another. Their effort must be, not so much to know the mind of Jesus, as to know their own minds. The name of Christian may be freely accorded to them if they claim it; because their lives may bear Christian fruit, and their conscientious purpose may be to live according to the pure spirit of Christianity. They may be nearer to Jesus, in fact, than many who are stronger in their belief. They are oftentimes seekers after truth, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, having really been educated by Christian influences up to the Christian standard, although intellectually disputing the Divine Christian authority. "To his own master every one standeth or falleth: who art thou that judgest another man's servant?"

But the distinction to which we refer is not the less real, and cannot be kept out of sight. Christian charity does not require, and allegiance to truth does not permit us, to neglect it. It is vital both in religion and theology. Are we disciples, or is Christ only first among equals? To

me, I confess, the question is one of infinite significance. Without deciding for others or judging them, it is to me a matter of infinite importance, to know whether I have a guide, a master, an authority, or not. I feel most deeply the comfort of those words which Jesus spoke to his disciples, before parting with them: "Peace I leave with you, my peace give I unto you; let not your heart be troubled, neither be ye afraid; as my Father spake unto me, even so have I spoken unto you." I would not, for the whole world, lose that confidence, that trust, that "repose which ever is the same." I would not, for the world, feel that all the great truths of religion depend, for their certainty to me, upon my own speculations. It is true that they are rational conclusions; and the more we study them, the more perfectly they seem in accordance with the natural laws of thought. The philosophical development of our own minds leads us continually back again to Christian truth. Natural religion, so called, culminates in the divine. But still I am thankful to God, that, on the portals of that resting-place of faith, it is written, "Thus saith the Lord." The perfect harmony between educated natural reason and the divine instructions of Jesus, should not deceive us. As, in moral philosophy, the highest goodness leads to the most perfect individual happiness, and the two ultimately coincide; and yet not happiness, but duty alone, must be recognized as the motive and law, or our seeking for happiness soon degenerates into self-seeking, which uses goodness as an instrument or means to a higher end, and sacrifices both means and end by the same mistake so it is in the department of religious truth, that reason, guided by the divine authority, leads us to assured convictions concerning God and eternity, and we are betrayed into thinking that the conclusion belongs to our own natural thought, and that no submission to authority is longer

required. But let the authority be discarded, hold to the truth discovered as only a human deduction from human premises, and the established foundation begins to give way, the superstructure of faith begins to totter. We think, instead of believing; we hope, instead of trusting; and presently go out from that peaceful resting-place, as wanderers, to seek after God, if haply we may find him. By no such speculations concerning truth did the elders obtain their good report. By no such questionings and probable conclusions were the martyrs' noble host strengthened and glorified. By no such human philosophy, however transcendental, were the apostles inspired to exclaim, "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." That is the word of power, "through our Lord Jesus Christ." He spake that which he knew, and testified that which he had seen, and we receive his witness. Human hesitation and doubt may remain; the weakness of the flesh may make the spirit waver; but the anchor of Christian faith is sure and steadfast. We know in whom we have believed, and return to him, again and again, from all our inquiries, to hear the words of eternal life.

The question of divine authority being answered, the first and most natural inquiry, in the settlement of our religious faith, is that which concerns Jesus himself. We may, indeed, obey his commands and believe his doctrines, without knowing any thing more concerning him, than that he was an inspired teacher. But the confidence of our faith and the fervor of our devotion must depend a great deal upon our opinions concerning him who brings the instruction and the commands. Who was Jesus Christ? What place does he hold in the universe? What do we mean when we call him divine, and when we call him human? What was he, not only in his office, but in him-

self, in his own nature? How does he stand in his relation to God, and how in relation to man?

The form in which we have put these questions will at once show to any thoughtful person, that the answer cannot be sharply and exactly given. Our knowledge of spiritual life is so imperfect, our conception of spiritual existence is so dim, that we see through a glass darkly at the best, and not yet face to face. We do not yet know as we are known. Ask the same questions concerning yourself, your own existence, your exact place in the universe; your relation to God,—how it is that you are dependent upon him, and yet free; your relation to man,—how it is that we are all equal before God, and yet separated from each other, through imperceptible gradations, by a distance almost as great as that which separates the grovelling brute, living upon husks, from the angels that wait to do God's bidding nearest to his throne, so that the same human nature includes the lowest cannibal savage and the highest Christian philanthropist,—and you will feel the limitation of your ignorance and weakness concerning yourself, not less than when you are seeking to be wise above what is written concerning Jesus Christ. We are like children having learned the alphabet, who make experiment of their knowledge by reading the poetry of Milton and the speculations of Plato. He who inquires about the spirit's life and growth, whether of his own soul or of those who are above him or below him, will find himself in a world of mystery. Like the bird which rises for a time with strong and confident wing, but presently the thinness of the air, the weakness of his muscles, and the attraction of the earth, compel him to return, exhausted and weary, to a resting-place; so, in our researches for spiritual truth, we advance confidently, with the feeling of assured knowledge, positive both in denial and assertion.

sanguine in the hope of arriving at the ultimate truth but soon, in the ascending flight, feel ourselves checked, limited, restrained, drawn back again to reconsider the premises of thought, compelled to seek a resting-place in the alphabet of Christianity. We begin with confidence, and come back with humility. We begin thinking ourselves little lower than the angels, and come back to prostrate ourselves before God, and exclaim, "What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him?" We begin with the thought that we can comprehend God himself, and all the mysteries of his infinity, and come back with the conviction that we do not even know ourselves. It is the practical lesson of humility, but also of conscious exaltation. Our hearts empty themselves of pride and arrogance, to become full of adoration and faith. We claim to know less; in reality, we know infinitely more. We would as soon think of bounding infinite space, as to define, in exact words, either the nature of God or of man, who was created in the image of God. But our consciousness of spiritual life and personal immortality becomes continually deeper; and the God, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, finds his dwelling-place in the humble and contrite heart.

Therefore let those who begin their theological inquiries with compass and line, to fix the exact boundaries of Christ's nature, as they would survey a field before buying it,—let them first try the experiment upon themselves. When they can tell me of their own souls, where the human ends and the divine begins, I will tell them the same concerning him. They who cannot tell what to think of John the Baptist must be content to remain in partial ignorance concerning him whose shoes John the Baptist was not worthy to bear. Something we may know, and I think abundantly enough for all the practical uses of life

and for its consolations. "My grace is sufficient for thee," was the answer to St. Paul, when he prayed that some thorn in the flesh should be removed. In like manner, the knowledge which we have is sufficient for us, if we use it well; and the truth which is made known may become more vitalizing to our souls because of that which remains unrevealed.

The principal source of knowledge concerning Jesus Christ must evidently be his testimony of himself. It is possible that his disciples were mistaken in their estimate of him, as we know they were during a great part of their lives; but his record of himself must be received as true. Even those who only admit that he was an honest, truth-telling man, must either modify that admission, or must equally admit that what he said of himself must be believed. But those who assent to his divine authority have committed themselves still more fully, and are no longer at liberty to question the truthfulness of his claims. It seems to me, that, among Christians, we may narrow down this question concerning Christ to the simple inquiry, "What did he himself say?" Both as to his exaltation and authority, and as to the limitations of these, if limitations exist, we are bound, as Christians, to rest upon his testimony, and have no right either to fall short of it, or to go beyond it.

After a careful examination of this testimony, we come to a clear and positive conviction upon at least two points in the case. First, that Jesus Christ claimed for himself a degree of dignity, authority, and power, such as no one else in all the records of history has ever claimed; and, secondly, that he distinctly declared the fact of limitation, and his own entire dependence upon God. These two propositions can be fully established by any one who will read the four Gospels with care. And although they may

leave a great deal that we wish to know still unsettled, they give a firm standing-ground of evangelical and reasonable belief.

Let us examine both propositions with the Bible before us; for I think that many will be surprised at the clearness and fulness of the proof.

In the first place, we assert that Jesus uniformly claimed for himself dignity, knowledge, authority, power; in a word, an elevation, both of nature and of office, such as no other teacher or lawgiver ever claimed. Neither Moses nor the prophets, nor Zoroaster nor Confucius nor Mahomet, nor any other whom history names, has dared to assume the position which Jesus assumed and maintained, by word and action, in his relation both to God and man. Nor do we refer, in this assertion, to special isolated passages, which ingenious critics may explain away, or get rid of as interpolations; but it rests still more upon the general tone of Christ's language and demeanor. The Sermon on the Mount is the utterance of a Lawgiver and Judge, who claims the right to fulfil or to destroy. "You have heard that it was said in old times;" but "I say unto you," that a new and better law is given. He declares the terms of acceptance with God, without hesitation, and claims a personal part in their enforcement. "Many shall say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord; but I will profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. vii. 22). Heaven and earth might pass away, but "my words shall not pass away" (Matt. xxiv. 35). He declared the sins of the penitent to be forgiven, and pronounced the sternest judgment of God upon the unbelieving and rebellious. He spoke of sins that could not be forgiven in this world, nor in the world to come (Matt. xii. 31). In speaking of the final judgment, or of the principles on which men will be judged, he

says, "Then shall the King" (meaning himself), — "then shall the King say, Come, ye blessed of my Father;" or "depart from me, ye accursed" (Matt. xxv. 34). "Whosoever confesses me before men, him will I also confess before the Father in heaven. Whosoever denieth me, him will I also deny" (Matt. x. 32). In speaking of the conflict of the world against himself, the chief stone of the corner, he said, "Whosoever falls on this stone shall be broken; but upon whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (Matt. xxi. 44). "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works" (Matt. xvi. 27). "All things are given to me of my Father," he said at another time; "and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matt. xi. 27). And then, having declared this closeness of relation with God, he turns himself towards man, with the ineffable dignity of saving love and power, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." When the disciples disputed concerning superiority, he rebuked them, and said, "Neither be ye called masters; for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren" (Matt. xxiii. 10). He distinctly declared himself, with a solemnity that indicates a peculiar meaning in the words, to be the Christ, the Anointed, the Messiah, "the Son of the living God;" and, when adjured by the high priest to tell them who he was, he added to such words as I have spoken, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matt. xxvi. 64). He taught his disciples, that, after he should leave them, his continued assistance and prayers for them would be essential, and said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my

name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. xviii. 20). Before his leaving them, according to the gospel record, he spake to them and said, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations;" that is, make disciples of them. I ask you to observe the absoluteness of authority, the comprehensiveness of the command, "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" thus introducing himself into that close affinity with God the Father, and claiming a personal place and office in the religion of the world; "teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 18).

We have thus far looked only at the Gospel of Matthew, and gleaned but a small part of the proofs which it affords. If we turn to the Gospel of John, their abundance is so great, that the recital of them would be simply to read the Gospel itself. When accused of violating the sabbath day, Jesus answered, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work" (John v. 17). What was the point of that answer? It was as if he had said, "The creative and sustaining power of God is not suspended on the sabbath day, and under the same divine authority I go on to work." The words were so striking, that the Jews thought them blasphemous; and he explained them by saying that he did not speak of independent authority (John v. 19). He declared himself, in the strong, figurative language of Scripture, more forcible than literal words, to be "the bread from heaven" (John vi. 51, 53) which every man must eat, to partake of the heavenly life. Again he said, with great solemnity, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink: he that believeth on me, out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water" (John vii. 37). At another time, varying the expression but repeating the

same idea, he said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John viii. 12). He called himself the door through which every man must pass (John x. 1); the vine upon which all living branches must grow, in order to bear any fruit (John xv. 1). In more literal words, he said, "No man cometh to the Father but by me" (John xiv. 6). When asserting his power to fulfil his promises, he said,

"My Father who gave them me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one" (John x. 29). The Jews again misunderstood him; and he explained himself as claiming delegated, not independent, power.

We are confining ourselves, you will observe, to Christ's own language concerning himself; and I have purposely avoided exceptional passages, and those which are of doubtful interpretation. The quotations given are such as to indicate the general tone of the Gospels. It is the tone of judicial authority, which could rightly be used by a divine ambassador, who knew himself to be speaking the words of divine truth, the commands of a divine law, the promises of divine love, the threatenings of divine justice. Imagine it to be assumed by any other, and it would be either blasphemy or madness. Nor can you get rid of it by any degree of critical boldness or ingenuity. Expurgate all such claims from Christ's words, and there would not be enough left to constitute a personality. The mythical system of Strauss, which is the destruction, not the expurgation, of history, would be the only result.

In this respect, at least, the life-like history of Jesus, by Renan, to which I have already referred, will do good. He makes Jesus a real personage, and divests him of all mythical appearance; so that we feel sure that such a person lived at the time, and under the circumstances, and

among the people, described in the Gospel history. But, admitting so much as this, how can we help going further? How can we avoid admitting that this Jesus being, as is supposed, a good and true man, made claims to a dignity altogether inconsistent with the idea, we do not say of advanced goodness, but even of common honesty? Listen to those words, which he spoke with such awful solemnity, and from which every believer continually derives hope and strength: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John xi. 25). And again he said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John xiv. 6). And yet again, "This is the will of Him that sent me, that every one that seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (John vi. 40). "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself, and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John v. 26). "For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father" (John v. 21). "Verily, verily I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live" (John v. 25). Interpret the words as you will, whether of the resurrection from sin to spiritual life, or from the grave to immortality, the language is utterly incompre-

hensible, as spoken by an honest man, without peculiar divine authority. They are imposture or madness or inspiration. Imagine them to be spoken by the best man you know, or of whom you may have read in history, and you will see how impossible they are, except under one of those suppositions. It is not only that the words are strong in themselves, and in the spiritual truth conveyed, but that they are made personal to Christ himself, as the agent of their fulfilment. Separate them from him, the speaker, and they are altogether lost. They are not abstract propositions to be proved, but personal testimony to be believed. We may verify them by the spiritual experience of personal faith ; but we cannot abstract them from Jesus himself, who first proved their truth, and gave it to us as the established law of life, without denying its veracity at the same time. The Christian system is “the truth as it is in Jesus,” not in abstract propositions. We cannot hold to it as Christian truth ; or, at least, I cannot, when we have falsified him.

According to my reading of the Scripture, therefore, the first proposition concerning Jesus Christ is fully proved. Whether we can fix the exact point of his elevation or not, and however ignorant we may be of his essential nature, as indeed we are ignorant of our own, we have abundant evidence from his own words and demeanor, that he occupied an exceptional place, both in relation to God and man, to do a work peculiar to himself, for the glory of God, and for the salvation of the world.

It remains to prove the second proposition, that his own words and conduct equally declare a limitation of authority, and his entire dependence upon God.

CHRIST, THE SON OF MAN.

BY W. G. ELIOT, D.D.

"I have not spoken of myself; but the Father that sent me, he gave me a commandment. what I should say, and what I should speak."—
JOHN xii. 50.

In my last discourse, we considered Christ's "record of himself," to prove that he claimed the dignity and authority requisite for the office he came to fulfil, in the redemption of the world from sin, and to make known the heavenly Father. It was an easy task, for the Gospels are full of such testimony; and the strength of his expressions is so great, that we do not wonder at their having been interpreted to mean more than was intended by himself. It is always the tendency, in every new religion or philosophy, for the disciples to magnify their master, so as to reflect glory both upon his work and their own. Probably, no instance can be given of an opposite tendency, in the whole history of philosophies and religions, since the world began. Accordingly, we find, in the early preaching of the Apostles, that they were almost at a loss how to express their love and veneration for him whom they had followed for the redemption of Israel. A careful examination of their words would, however, show that they never forgot the difference between the Father and the Son, between the Ambassador and the Sovereign who sends him, between the Médiator who effects the reconciliation, and the infinite Law-giver who establishes the terms of acceptance. In subsequent

ages, this manifest distinction was gradually lost but it required three full centuries and more to bring the creed of Christendom to its denial. The progress of change may be clearly marked in ecclesiastical history, step by step, from the confession made by Peter and his brethren,— “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,”—to that most wonderful of all human compositions, written in the fifth century, called the Athanasian Creed. Such historical inquiries, however, are difficult and cumbersome. The language of the Apostles themselves, in their letters to the churches, is sometimes indefinite, and frequently hard of interpretation.

We must return, therefore, to Christ himself, as the best, if not the only sure, source of knowledge. The more desirous we are of doing him honor, the more confidently must we rest our faith, at last, upon his own words. We appeal to them therefore, again, in this second part of our argument, as the final and conclusive authority. If he declared a limitation of his nature and attributes, no articles of faith nor ecclesiastical authority, nor ingenuity of argument, can justify us in asserting that such limitation does not exist.

In the first place, we refer to the general tone of Christ's words and intercourse with his disciples to prove the limitations of his nature and authority, in the same manner as we referred to them to prove their elevation and extent. Negatively speaking, this argument is very strong. Try to imagine what would have been the tone and demeanor of one who was conscious of being, in some sense or other, the Infinite God; or one who spoke by his own independent authority, and who possessed, in himself, the attributes of self-existence, omnipresence, and almighty power. I think that your familiarity with the Gospels will show you, at once, how different it would have been from what we

actually read concerning Jesus of Nazareth. Certainly, his disciples, even those nearest to him, did not understand him as asserting the claim of equality with the Father. He was their friend, their kinsman, whom they gradually learned to recognize as the Messiah promised to Israel, and to whom the higher title, "Son of the Living God," could be justly given. But they questioned him with perfect freedom, expostulated with him, and once, at least, rebuked him. One of them betrayed him; all of them forsook him; and, when he was put to death, they thought it was an end of all, and that the hope of Israel was extinguished. They came to embalm his body, and refused to believe the fact of his resurrection until proved to them beyond their power of denial. How can we account for this, if his general intercourse with them, or his words concerning himself, had been those of one claiming for himself the attributes of deity?

But the argument does not rest upon this negative view. If we carefully examine Christ's language, and accompany him in the Gospel history, as he went from place to place, going about to do good, speaking the words of truth, giving the promises of eternal life, the most striking feature in the whole will be his habitual reference of every thing to God the Father. His humility and piety are as remarkable as his tone of authority, and the two traits are inseparable from each other. In his miracles, he appealed to the power of God, as that by which alone he was able to work (John v. 19, 30). He claimed to be heard and believed, because the words that he spoke were not his own, but the Father's who sent him (John vii. 16). His language and conduct were those of an ambassador, who came, not to do his own will, but the will of the Father in heaven. The highest title that he claimed, or permitted to be used concerning him, was "The Son of God;" a title which in

itself clearly implies derivation and dependence, and as clearly is inconsistent with self-existence. In several instances, he distinctly denies the attributes of deity. "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God" (Matt. xix. 17; Mark x. 18). "To sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to give; but it shall be given to those for whom it is prepared of my Father in heaven" (Matt. xx. 23). "Of that day and hour knoweth no man; no, not the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father" (Mark xiii. 32; Matt. xxiv. 36). Such language may be consistent with very high exaltation; but, if it does not declare limitation and dependence, no words could possibly do so.

There is one fact, however, which pervades the whole life of Jesus, which is to me more forcible than any words could be. I mean the fact that he lived a life of prayer and thanksgiving. He spent whole nights in prayer, and looked up to God, as he taught us to look up, in all times of trial and difficulty. Not only in the beginning of his ministry, but throughout its continuance and at its close, in the Garden of Gethsemane and upon the Cross, he prayed to God as one who absolutely depended upon him, and gave thanks to God for whatever he received or was able to accomplish. (See Heb. v. 7, 8, 9.) How can we reconcile this fact, which no one will deny, with the assertion made by a part of the Christian Church, but never made by Christ himself, of absolute equality with the Father? If in any sense, and by whatever mystery of union, the Divine power was inherent in himself, how would prayer and thanksgiving have been possible? Or should we not be obliged to regard it, as some have done, as an outward show for the sake of the example? It would have been only the seeming of prayer, a self-communion, and not that which it evidently was, the outpouring of his

whole soul, the expression of absolute self-consecration to the Almighty God. "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me! nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. xxvi. 39). "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. xxvii. 46). "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke xxiii. 46).

I ask you to observe the peculiar force of this argument, and that it cannot be fairly met by the theory of a double nature in Christ, according to which he was both God and man. For prayer is the most interior of all spiritual experience, and is of necessity addressed to one higher than him who prays. To suppose a twofold consciousness in Christ, one conscious mind *praying* to the other, while the two are indissolubly connected with each other to constitute one person, would be to use language which both Trinitarian and Unitarian disavow, and which is so obscure that no intelligent thought of prayer would remain. He who prays truly and heartily, as Christ evidently prayed, declares the limitation of his whole nature, and the absolute supremacy of the Most High. I desire to treat the opinions of all persons with respect; and we know that some things which seem absurd to us are credible to others, because they see them at a different point of view, so that, perhaps using the same words, they mean a different thing: but I must frankly say, that I cannot comprehend how any one, who believes that Jesus Christ really prayed to God for strength and gave thanks to God for support, can also believe, in any intelligible sense of the words, that Jesus Christ was himself God, self-existent in being, independent in power.

It is not that we object to the word "mystery," or to the idea conveyed by it. To deny the fact of mystery, infinite and inscrutable, would be to stultify one's self. Human arrogance and folly can scarcely go so far. Mystery is the

law and condition of our lives. It is the infinite space which everywhere surrounds us. It is the eternity in which we live. It is the omnipresent power which sustains and directs us, while our conscious freedom is still uncontrolled. Mystery is but another word to express the fact of our ignorance and the limitations of our being. The little that we know is barely enough to indicate the infinity of knowledge and truth beyond us. "It is as high as heaven, what canst thou know? deeper than hell, what canst thou do?" The sphere of our knowledge is very small, compared with that in which faith alone must be our guide.

But we must not deceive ourselves with words. The acknowledgment of mystery does not imply belief in contradictions. If two propositions are contradictory in terms, we may perceive the contradiction, although there may remain a great deal, in the given case, of which we know nothing. If, under the name of mystery, you tell me that two parallel lines, sufficiently produced, will meet and ultimately coincide, or that a part is equal to the whole, you tell me that which is no mystery, and which we require very little knowledge to refute. It is manifestly untrue. And so, in religious inquiry, there are axioms of faith of which we may be just as sure as if we knew every thing. We cannot define the nature of God, nor can we define the nature of Jesus Christ; but if we believe that Christ is a conscious, intelligent, spiritual being, who, according to his own words, derived his being and authority from God, and habitually looked to God the Father, both in prayer and thanksgiving, as the source of all strength and life, we cannot consistently, at the same time, believe that God and Christ are the same being, or that, being different, they are equal to each other. Still less can we assert equality and identity, and the relation of depen-

dence, at one and the same time. The word "mystery" does not cover such inconsistencies of thought. For my own part, in the attempt to reconcile them, I either lose the idea of God in that of Jesus Christ, or the idea of Christ in that of God. But the Bible requires no such confusion of thought; and we prefer to rest in the words of Christ himself: "This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3); words which were uttered in prayer, at a time when his earthly ministry was almost finished.

We have already alluded to the usual method of avoiding the argument now presented. A twofold nature is claimed for Jesus Christ, by which he was perfect God and perfect man at the same time. But there are two reasons why this answer fails, even if we are able to attach an intelligible meaning to it. In the first place, it is not asserted that Jesus had a double consciousness; for, on the contrary, unity of person and of consciousness is claimed for him. He must have spoken, therefore, and thought and acted at each particular time, as an individual. When he said "I" and "me," he must have meant *himself*, as he actually was when speaking, in his whole being. He was so understood and gave no intimation whatever of meaning any thing else. To assert that he spoke sometimes in one nature and sometimes in another, without giving intimation how he was to be understood; and, still more, that, in the same conversations, he alternated from one to the other, without explanation,—would be equivalent to asserting that we cannot understand him at all. The supposition is inconsistent with the plainness, simplicity, and truthfulness of Christ's words; and no teacher of religious truth would consent to such a rule of equivocal and ambiguous instruction. When Jesus said, "My Father is greater than I" (John xiv. 28); and again, "I ascend to my

Father and your Father, to my God and your God" (*John xx. 17*); and again, "I can do nothing of myself" (*John v. 30*), — which was his common method of speaking, — there is but one fair and just mode of interpretation. We have no right to interpret the Bible by rules of criticism which would change any other book into prevarication and falsehood.

For another reason, the theory of a double nature fails in its purpose. Taking Christ's own language as our guide, the passages in which he claims the highest and most mysterious exaltation, and which therefore must refer to his highest nature, whatever it may be, are the same in which he most distinctly asserts the limitation both of authority and being. For example, the words, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father, and no man knoweth the Father but the Son" (*Matt. xi. 27*), — indicate an intimacy and exclusiveness of communion greater perhaps than anywhere else expressed. But they are immediately preceded by the words, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father," and by thanksgiving to God, by whom this elevation, however great, had been conferred: "I thank thee, O Father! Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." He speaks of the glory in which he was to come, as "the glory of his Father." In the judgment scene, when he represents himself as the King, he says, "Come, ye blessed of my Father" (*Matt. xxv. 34*). When asserting his power to overthrow his enemies, he said, "Think ye not that I could pray to my Father, and he would give me twelve legions of angels?" (*Matt. xxvi. 53*). Before the judgment-seat of Pilate, when asserting his own future triumph, he still speaks of delegated authority: "The Son of man shall sit on the right hand of power" (*Matt. xxvi. 64*). When he said, "All

power is given to me in heaven and in earth" (Matt xxviii. 18), the words contain their own limitation, in the word "given," which implies a superior from whom the power is received, and makes it consistent with the special limitations of authority and power elsewhere expressed by Jesus himself. When Jesus said, "Glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John xvii. 5), we must not forget that they are words of prayer to God the Father.

I confidently challenge the Bible student to adduce a single passage of Scripture, where Christ speaks of himself in this exalted tone of authority and divine communion, in which he does not with equal distinctness declare that he spoke and worked and lived by the will and power of him whom he uniformly declared to be the only true God, the infinite and almighty Father.

But even if there were exceptions, and if we found general declarations of authority or power without limitation expressed at the same time, they would give us no embarrassment; for this is the peculiar force of the argument we are now using, that a particular negation, at any one time, has the effect of limiting all general expressions upon the same subject. Thus, if I were to say that a dictator has absolute control of all the affairs of the nation, and were to repeat the assertion a hundred times, with ever so strong language, but were to introduce a single sentence declaring that he has no control over religious affairs or over the domestic relations of society, that one expression of limitation would cover the whole ground, and modify the whole statement. It would be no longer an absolute dictatorship, but one with limited powers.

Again, although no such special limitation was directly spoken of, it might be as clearly and distinctly expressed by reference to a higher authority, as that under which all

the power possessed is exercised. Thus, if we should speak of a dictatorship established by the people, with absolute powers, it would not be understood as independent of the authority by which created; but, on the contrary, as restrained, and subject to discontinuance by the same power which established it. If that responsibility and ultimate obedience were denied, the dictatorship would become a usurpation, and the republic would be destroyed. However unlimited within a certain range of action, the higher authority still remains and must be acknowledged; and its acknowledgment is in itself the clearest expression of limitation and dependence. No statement of delegated powers can convey the force of independent supremacy.

You will perceive how closely this bears upon the subject in hand. Christ always refers directly to God the Father as the source of all his authority. He claimed to be heard and obeyed, because he spake what he had been commanded to speak,—as when he said, “The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son” (John v. 22). And again, when he claimed the power of raising the dead, in one of the most remarkable passages of the Bible, he says, “For, as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself, and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man” (John v. 26, 27). Is it not strange that this same language is quoted to prove the self-existence of Christ? If he has “life in himself,” it is argued, and if, as said just before, “he giveth life to whom he will,” does not that imply self-existence and independent power? not observing, apparently, that the same sentence declares the source both of the power and the life, and the reason for their being given. “The Father hath given to the Son to have life in himself” is a denial of self-existence, not its assertion. “The Father

hath given him authority to execute judgment" is a denial of independent power, however great that power may be. Accordingly, we find, in the same conversation, and only two verses later, the following sentence: "I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John v. 30).

We contend that there is no passage in the Scripture where Christ claims higher exaltation, both of nature **and** of office, than in this which we have now considered, in which we find such clear and unequivocal declaration of *derived* existence and *limited* authority. If such language, under such circumstances, can be set aside, I do not see how it would have been possible for Christ to have guarded himself from misconstruction. If those words do not express limitation and dependence, then no words whatever could have done it.

Let me remind you that I am arguing only to a single point; namely, the fact of limitation. We are not speaking of degrees of exaltation, nor denying any thing short of the Infinite and Supreme. That would be a matter of subsequent inquiry, comparatively insignificant in importance. However exalted the nature and authority of Christ, so long as the fact of derivation and dependence is admitted, as he himself declared it, the difference between finite and infinite remains, with the absolute supremacy of the Father, whom he made known to us as "the only true God." Such is evidently the argument of the Apostle Paul, whose language concerning Christ is often misunderstood. In the midst of his most glowing language, speaking of Christ's kingdom, "when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power," he adds these final and conclusive words: "But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did

put all things under him; and when all things shall be subdued under him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto Him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. xv. 28).

We conclude, therefore, that Jesus did not assert for himself the supremacy of nature and attributes which subsequent times asserted for him, but that he distinctly and uniformly declared the fact of derivation, of limitation of dependence. He was the Son of God, and declared to be so, with power to make known the will of God, to manifest the character of God, to reconcile the world to God; but in all he was the messenger of God's love, who came forth from the Father to do and to speak whatever his Father commanded him. They are his own words, and we can find no authority for going beyond them. We prove our allegiance to Christ himself by thus receiving him. We stand up for Jesus by refusing to add any thing to his testimony. We honor the Son as we honor the Father, by accepting the words of Christ concerning the Father and concerning himself. We repeat them, and would write them all over our Church and upon the living tablets of our hearts: "This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

FOURTH SERIES.]

[No. 3.

HUMAN NATURE

NOT RUINED, BUT INCOMPLETE.

BY

REV. C. C. EVERETT.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

BOSTON.

OUR FAITH.

*The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.*

TYPICAL COVENANT OF A UNITARIAN CHURCH.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

OUR DECLARATION

(As expressed in the *By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association*.)

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity ; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(As expressed by the *National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test ; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

HUMAN NATURE NOT RUINED, BUT INCOMPLETE.

BY REV. C. C. EVERETT.

Two theories of Human Nature are often expressed, neither of which is wholly true, and neither of which is fully believed, even by those who have adopted it as their own. One of these theories is that human nature is wholly evil; the other is that human nature is wholly good and perfect. One explains all the evil in the world by the utterly depraved natures of the individuals who make up society; the other explains the sins of the individual by the evil which he finds embodied in the outer world. To the one, each separate life is a turbid stream, polluting the fair earth; to the other, each new life is a fountain sweet and pure, whose waters will soon become polluted by the mire through which they flow. Neither of these theories is fully believed. Those who insist most strongly on the total depravity of human nature, we find recognizing, in actual life, the native virtues of the soul; while those who insist on the perfect purity of the individual nature at its birth, recognize differences in character, and original predispositions to certain faults or vices. Neither of these theories can be wholly true. If man is wholly evil, whence the good that is in the world? If man is

wholly good, whence the evil? The doctrine of the total depravity of man, indeed, confutes itself. If it is my nature to do what we call evil, then it ceases to be evil. The lines of Dr. Watts suggest a truth that may be applied to every sphere of life. We say,—

"Let dogs delight to bark and bite,
For God hath made them so;
Let bears and lions growl and fight,
For 'tis their nature too."

We call a man sinful in proportion as he lives like the beasts; but if that is his nature, if God has made him so, it ceases to be sin. It is a well-known fact, that a large part of this continent, as well as of Europe, was once covered with glaciers. Scientific men formerly attempted to explain this accumulation of glacial ice, by showing how a period of intense cold might have been brought upon the earth. The colder the earth of the past, the better, they thought, they understood this glacial action. It is now known, that, in such intense cold, no glacier could have been formed. Heat is needed to cause such an accumulation of vapor from the ocean, that, when it congealed, it should settle down in these almost inconceivable masses. A wholly evil nature cannot sin, more than a wholly cold world can produce glaciers. There is needed within the nature a principle or a possibility of goodness to make sin possible.

If we leave our theories, and look at the world as it is we find good and evil side by side; we find even the germs of good and evil side by side, in every individual nature. Our problem is to understand the relation in which these two elements stand to one another.

When we look more closely, we find that all virtues stand in a certain connection with one another. Together, they form a perfect whole. Each is needed by all the rest for

their completeness; and each needs all the rest, or it is imperfect. We can conceive of an ideal man in which all virtues exist, each in its true proportion, and together form a beautiful and complete unity. This possible perfection and harmonious co-existence we see to be the plan after which human nature is shaped. This completed plan is what we strive to realize in our dreams, our romances, our loves and aspirations. We cannot conceive, as was just stated, of a being wholly evil. We can conceive, and cannot help conceiving, of a being wholly good. There is thus the trace of plan and system in the goodness, while the evil is only the imperfection and interruption of this ideal plan.

The question now meets us, Is this perfect nature, of which we can trace the imperfect and scattered elements, ruined or incomplete? When we see these scattered human virtues, of which no life is wholly destitute, and which, in spite of sin and wrong, enoble the world, are we looking upon the ruins, the broken arches, the crumbling pillars, of a past perfection; or are we looking at the broad foundation and uprising columns of a perfection that is yet to be? According as we take one or the other of these views is our thought of humanity sad or hopeful. To many, the grandest exhibition of human virtue can be only sorrowful. It can remind them only of the greatness of their loss. If a fragment is so fair, what must have been the original magnificence? Not merely do they wander among ruins; these ruins are blasted by a curse. It was the bolt of the wrath of God that scattered the fair structure; and whatever remains, however beautiful at first sight, is yet scarred by the mark of his anger. To others, the virtues of human life have a grace and a joy that are not in themselves. They are not merely lovely: they are the prophecies of the grander loveliness that is to come. The world is to them

no ruin blasted and accursed. They see the city of God slowly forming itself out of the chaos ; and they see, above all, the smile of God's blessing.

We can determine which of these theories is true, only by considering the arguments upon which they rest. The belief that human nature is a ruin, blasted by the curse of God, rests upon the story of the fall of man, as it is related in the book of Genesis, and supported by the traditions of other nations, that speak of a golden age in the distant past. What is the element of human nature, from which springs the tendency to this backward-looking glance, by which individuals, as well as races, turn so often with sad longing to their early years, we need not here inquire ; neither is there a necessity for examining the authority of the passage in Genesis to which reference has been made. The incident of the speaking serpent, and of the formation of woman from a rib taken out of the side of Adam, would seem to remove this narration from the sphere of literal history. The name of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil"—a tree which grows only in the gardens of the soul—would seem to imply that the story was not originally intended to be received as historic fact ; while the yielding of Adam and Eve to the very first temptation would show that they could not have been originally very different from the weakest of their descendants. The Greek legend of Pandora is commonly related, as if Pandora brought, in a chest, to man, all the evils of life. The genuine legend was different. Man, it relates, had all the evils of life locked up in a box, from which they could not escape. Pandora persuaded him to lift the lid, and they came forth, and filled the earth with grief and terror. Such is the true conception of the fall of man, in contrast with the one commonly held. The heart of man was the sealed chest, which contained all sins and woes. Temptation could not

bring them. It could only persuade man to lift the fatal lid. The story of the fall has a sublime truth and significance; but its truth does not lie on the plane of history, and its significance does not concern the hard facts which mark the beginning of the development of the human race.

For the belief that human nature is not ruined, but incomplete, we have the unvaried testimony of history, so far as history has traced the course of human development. History is, indeed, and always will be, imperfect. It has not reached, and probably never will reach, the beginning of the life of man upon the earth. But, so far as it has penetrated backward, it has found itself tending towards the savage or barbarous state; and the earliest traces of human presence are the traces of savage or barbarous life. Even the book of Genesis, which describes the fair beginning of human history, shows traces of a preceding polytheism. Its very words, the words put into the mouth of the Creator himself, are half-converted heathen. The conception is monotheistic; but the language, "Let us make man in our image," is polytheistic. This is not the place for historic detail or discussion. I know the mystery which broods over the first life of man upon the earth. What agencies of creation or of elevation were at work, it is not for us, at present, to say. It is only a flippant conceit that can give unhesitating judgment. We can only say, that, so far as known facts can be laid hold of, the history of the human race has been a progressive one. We can take this for a certainty; while the assumption of a fall, from the effects of which this progress is a slow emerging, is purely hypothetical, and may be left out of the account, until we have some historical ground to sustain it.

If it be true, as history represents, that the race of man is progressing from a state of savage and barbarous

life to a life of love and knowledge, to the refinements of civilization, and to the inspiration of Christianity, we have a satisfactory solution of the great problem of the mingled good and evil in life. We should be prepared to find all the wrong and the violence that we do find. From half-civilized savages what more could we expect? The law of hereditary descent, which is elsewhere so powerful, cannot be disregarded here. We find even in our household pets traces of the wild life of their remote ancestors; and we must believe that only very slowly would the tendencies inwrought by ages of barbarous life be eliminated from the very structure of the race. Then, too, our habits of thought, our prejudices, our habits of feeling, our forms of government, our literature, our theologies, are all of the past. Each generation has its successor in its training, and it has been so from the beginning. Very slowly, then, can humanity have moved along its way. Moreover, as this elevation of the race, and of the individuals that compose it, depends upon a moral purpose; whenever this purpose is temporarily missing, there will be a lapse, a sliding-back, so that the ground won will have to be won over again. This is the disturbing effect of sin in human history,—of sin which is the close-following shadow of freedom.

It will be seen that this is no rose-colored view of human nature. It recognizes all its faults, its vices, its sins. It recognizes the hard selfishness which forms so great an element even in our most advanced society. But it recognizes also the virtues of humanity. It has a place for all the flashes of nobility and of self-sacrificing heroism, which have glorified, at however rare intervals, the history of every race. It has a place for those individuals who seem to us perfect, who are themselves the prophecies and the exemplars of the coming completeness of that common

nature of which they are partakers. It has a place for the scattered and often hidden beginnings and hints of a better nature, which we find even in the most depraved. Still more, it recognizes the royal claims and bearing of virtue, wherever it appears, and the homage which the lowest and the vilest pay to it. Virtue does not appear upon the earth as vanquished or dethroned. Its dignity is not traditional, due by courtesy to its past supremacy. Virtue, wherever it appears, feels itself young and strong, the heir of the world; and men recognize, by a certain instinctive prescience, the reality of its coming power.

We need hardly ask, whether the belief that human nature is a melancholy ruin of the past, or that it is indeed as yet incomplete, but sublime already with the grandeur of its coming perfection, falls in best with the tendencies and instincts of the present. The theory that human nature is a ruin might have been believed, indeed, among the corruptions that marked the period when the Roman Empire was tottering to its fall, and men fancied that the world itself was hastening to its end. It might be believed, perhaps, even now, in the old world, where tradition still controls the lives, if not the hearts, of men. It might be believed at other periods in the history of the world; but in this nineteenth century, in the midst of the untram melled thought and the fresh springing life of this new world, such a doctrine can have neither place nor power. It lies athwart the course of all the ideas and principles which mark the present. Faith in man is the form, which, in the present age, faith in God pre-eminently takes. Men once fancied that they honored God by degrading, in their thought, the nature of man. Now men can find no better way of honoring God than by recognizing the traces of the reflection of his perfections, however faint and scattered, in the human soul. All the great movements of the present

rest on this faith in human nature. The world is slowly becoming democratic. In remote nations and in divers ways, we find, the principle of democracy is becoming more and more the ruling power. In this nation, it is fully recognized in theory, however imperfectly in fact, as the one central and fundamental principle; and democracy can have no other basis than faith in human nature. Even the church in America, which involves the most delicate and the loftiest relations of the soul, rests upon a popular basis. No matter what the professed belief of any church may be; when it throws itself, fully and unreservedly upon the people for its support, it shows that it has faith in the people, in those religious instincts which are its only firm foundation, in that love of the highest which seeks to embody itself in outward form and service.

This faith in human nature is not merely faith in what it is, but still more faith in what it is to be. The only basis of reform must be the belief, that what can now get a footing, however slight, will hereafter stand on a foundation which cannot be shaken. You leave your boat on the sloping beach, just where the ripples of the ebbing tide can lap, though they cannot float it. Do you not fear that it will be swept away? You know that the waves, which now just float about it, in a few moments will not reach it that they will sink away, and leave it every moment further inland. Such confidence do we have in whatever embodies the purest principles of right. If it can obtain a foothold, we are secure. The wrong and prejudice that threaten it, that almost sweep it from its foundation, we know will recede in an ebb that will be succeeded by no flood-tide, and leave it, not merely unmoved, but unthreatened.

The belief, that human nature is not ruined, although as yet incomplete, involves the fairest promise of the future. When we look backward only, we might feel proud of our

attainments: when we look forward, we are humbled. The mountain-side is not half scaled. When we look down, we grow giddy with the height that we have reached; but when we look up, and see the summit as far removed in appearance as if we had not begun to climb, our dizzy pride leaves us. The philanthropy, the science, the civilization, of the future will excel ours, as ours does the past. Compare Christianity with Christ, and you will see the difference between the Christianity of the present and that of the future.

The truth we are considering applies to the individual as well as to the race. The most sunken soul is not a hopeless ruin; the loftiest is not yet complete. Channing seems to us a perfect man. Yet Channing drew his strongest faith in immortality from the prophecy of completeness, contained in the unfinished plan even of his own being.

Who does not feel within himself like hints of what he might be, but is not? What character can we become familiar with, which does not give us hints of what it was meant to be, but is not yet? Even from what we see, we can guess at the ideal which that particular character is meant to reach. Or, when we cannot find this in ourselves and others, we find it in our thought of Jesus. It does not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that we shall be like him. Let us, then, strive after the highest and the best. Let us take nothing less than Christ himself for our pattern; knowing, that, though our natures are imperfect, they are not deserted by the loving inspiration of God, and that we are meant to grow up, in all things, unto Him who is our Head.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

The Association is supported by the voluntary contributions of churches and individuals. Annual subscriptions of any amount are solicited. Address communications and contributions to the Secretary at his office, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The following is the simple

FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of dollars.

FOURTH SERIES.]

[No. 4.

THE ATONEMENT

IN CONNECTION WITH

THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

BY

REV. F. H. HEDGE, D.D.

From the Postoffice Mission,
UNITARIAN CHURCH
345 Congress St., Portland, Me.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

BOSTON.

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose." — ARTICLE I.
of the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.

THE ATONEMENT

IN CONNECTION WITH

THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

THE "Atonement," in Christian theology, is the action of Christ's ministry in bringing men by faith and obedience into right relation with God.

The death of Christ is regarded by the Christian Church as the supreme act in that mediatorial agency. An efficacy has been ascribed to it beyond the emphasis it gives to the general influence of his character and life, as an attestation of the truth, as the highest proof the Son of Man could give of the strength and sincerity of his conviction. In the view of the majority of Christians, it is a good deal more than this. According to some, it is an expiatory sacrifice required by God for the remission of sins; the satisfaction of a debt due to Divine justice, which had a right to demand the everlasting perdition of the human race as the penalty of Adam's sin, but was willing to accept the death of Christ as compensation instead. According to others, it is a demonstration or device enabling God, consistently with the fixed principles of his government, to pardon sin which else, in view of the dignity and claims of Divine law, were unpardonable. There is no essential difference in principle between these two

views. The idea of *vicarious satisfaction*, in the way of expiation or of demonstration, is common to both. The rational Christian rejects this idea, as inconsistent with those views of the Divine nature which seem to him to be the dictate of reason and the doctrine of the gospel; and which represent God as a loving Father who forgives, unconditionally, penitent sinners.

On the other hand, there is a negative extreme in relation to this matter,—a way of thinking which makes no account of the cross as an element of the Christian dispensation, which denies all value to the death of Christ, beyond the evidence it furnishes of his sincerity, and the consequent presumption it affords of his Divine authority. This view does not satisfy the Christian consciousness, no more than it does the sense of the Scripture.

Our conception of the efficacy of Christ's death, as a means of atonement, will depend on our view of the person of Christ; his place and function in the spiritual-historical economy. If we view him merely as a human individual, differing from other individuals only in the excellence of his character, the wisdom of his doctrine, and the purity of his life, the gospel history will be to us comparatively a barren tale; the true import of the facts and ideas presented by it, will be for ever hidden from our eyes. It is not thus that Jesus speaks of himself. It is not thus that he is described by his apostles. He declares himself, and they describe him, as a representative personality,—a revelation of God in man, a manifestation, a showing forth of the Divine, by which mankind are to be taught and won, redeemed from evil and united to God. "For in him," says Paul, "dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." "Ye know," says John, "that he was manifested to take away the sins of the world." The point of view, then, from which to regard the cross of

Christ, is the idea of the God-man,— Christ a manifestation of divine humanity.

It is in the light of this idea that we are to interpret the Atonement. That central truth of the Christian system finds its best expression in these words of Christ, “If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me.” We have here the end to be accomplished, and the means by which it is to be effected. The end is spiritual emancipation, redemption from the power of earth and sin, reconciliation and union with God. The means by which it is to be effected is Christ’s *drawing*,— the moral attraction of that supreme example of self-renunciation, of self-annihilation, which the cross exhibits to our reverent contemplation. As Christ is a typical personage, so all his history is typical, consequently his passion. It is a manifestation, a symbol, the contemplation of which exerts a saving influence on the mind.

Herein consists the great difference between the ecclesiastical-dogmatic, and the true, scriptural view of the death of Christ, and the Atonement, as connected with it. The former supposes the death of Christ to act *mechanically*, as a substitute for punishment and human righteousness. The other supposes it to act *morally*, as a motive and inducement to righteousness. We readily distinguish between these two modes of action,— the mechanical and the moral. We see them illustrated in analogous cases in human life. If I wish to reclaim a drunkard, I may act upon him by physical constraint, by removing from him all possible means of intoxication; or I may operate by encouragement and example, by the influence of my character and life, by a manifestation of temperance and self-denial in my own person. In the one case he is acted upon by mechanical, in the other by moral, agency. If I wish to relieve a debtor from pecuniary embarrassment,

I may release him by paying outright the sum which he owes ; or I may persuade him, by my influence and example, to such efforts as shall enable him eventually to clear himself. Again, I may train up a child in the way he should go, by enforcing compliance with certain rules, or by exhibiting in my own person a model of the virtues I wish to inculcate. In the one case, I act mechanically ; in the other, morally.

The efficacy of Christ's death, as I interpret it, is not a mechanical operation, but a moral influence. It does not save men by offering to Divine justice or Divine wrath an equivalent for punishment, or exhibiting a vicarious righteousness ; but by making men good and holy, and thus reconciling and restoring them to God. In other words, *it is not an action on the Divine mind, but on the human.* It does not influence God to forgive, but influences man to repent, and by repentance to be renewed and reconciled to God. Its influence consists in moral attraction. "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me." In what, then, does this attraction consist ? How is it that Christ *draws* us by his cross ?

1. He draws us, in the first place, by the love he excites in us as a personal benefactor, as a sufferer in our behalf. This is the nearest and most superficial view of the subject. Gratitude to Christ, as a personal benefactor, is by no means the highest of Christian sentiments. Yet it is a Christian sentiment. It has a true foundation in our moral nature, and exerts a quickening and sanctifying influence on all the other sentiments and affections. The veneration we experience for one who has offered up himself for the truth, and for human weal, the gratitude we feel to him as a personal benefactor, is not only a just tribute to the object of such sentiments, but a profitable and saving exercise of that which is noblest and best in

ourselves. The martyr, who so acts on us through our affections, does more by his death to further the ends which he served, than could have been done by a lengthened life. Such virtue goes forth from the death of Christ; such in kind, but greater in degree than attends the death of other martyrs, inasmuch as his character was more exalted, his mission more extensive, his passion more sublime, than all else that history records of martyr-deeds and martyr-doom. Other heroes are identified with the limited sphere in which and for which they lived and died,—at most, with the age and country which they served; but Jesus is the hero of all times and climes. So long as the Christian world endures, his name will be the centre of history, and his sacrifice will draw all men to him. The relation which other martyrs bear to us personally is distant and faint. We honor the virtues they displayed, we acknowledge the good they accomplished; but it is only indirectly and by inference that we feel ourselves personally indebted to their lives and deaths. But the Christian believer feels towards Jesus a personal obligation, as if the Saviour of the world had had him distinctly in view, and had suffered with special reference to him, as one who should be benefited by his ministry and death. To the believing Christian, he is nearer than any character in history is or can be. We are bound with him in one bond, leagued in one interest, and that, the central interest of human life. Herein consists the peculiar attraction of that cross, by which the crucified draws his own. It is no stranger, but a brother, whom we see lifted up in that sacred “monstrance,” in which the world’s host was elevated to human view. The sacred heart that bled upon that wood has watered human-kind with its saving blood,—the blood of the Son of Man. It was the great and divine brother “who bore our sins in his own body on

that tree," and shed his life to gather us all into one brotherhood of faith and love.

2. Christ draws us by exhibiting in himself, on the cross, the power and beauty of a true and divine humanity. Christ, I have said, is a revelation of God in man ; in other words, of humanity re-instated in the likeness of the Godhead, in which it was conceived. As the Son of God, he represents the Divine ; as the Son of Man, he is the representative of the human,—the ideal man ; the visible bodying forth of the perfect and divine humanity. All that we behold in him is essentially human,—human in its rudiment and type and idea, if not customary in its manifestation. And, although providentially, officially, he occupies a place peculiar to himself,—psychologically, there was nothing in him that is not, in its germ and possibility, in all men ; and which all, in the full unfolding of their humanity, may not hope to realize. Nowhere but in Jesus has our nature reached so ostensibly its true perfection ; and, but for him, we had not known what that nature is in its possibility and its calling,—its highest and deepest capacity and strength.

Many wise and good have blessed the world with their living and with their dying ; heroes have poured forth their lives on the battlefield, a free libation for their country's good ; confessors have given their bodies to be burned, a willing sacrifice to truth ; sages have received, in the solitude of their prisons, the cup of death ; but nowhere, as in him, has Divinity incarnated itself. There is none in whom the idea is so discriminated from earthly circumstance, so lifted out of its environment and brought so near to us, as in Christ. In him we behold, as in a mirror, what manner of beings we are and behoove to be,—our actual and possible self. In his virtues we behold our defects ; in his greatness, our littleness ; our weakness in

his strength. At the same time, the qualities which shine forth in him reveal to us an inner man, a Christ yet unformed in the depths of the soul, which the contemplation of that historical Christ is fitted to unfold. Thus, he, in his moral elevation, draws after him all, who, "beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory." Nowhere does the spiritual supremacy of Christ appear so conspicuous as in the closing scene of his earthly career. There we behold the human raised to its highest grandeur, in the final conquest over self and the world. We need not ask if other martyrs have not borne as much, and suffered as keenly, as the Son of Man. Enough that we have here an image, clear and distinct, of humanity triumphant in the last extreme, bearing all and conquering all that man can endure or life inflict. This is not strength of will opposing itself to the power of fate, such as ancient tragedy described, in the chained Prometheus, as the highest in man; but the deeper strength which springs from entire subjection of the will in willing endurance. In the contemplation of the cross, we behold humanity "lifted up from the earth," exalted, transfigured, victorious over fear and pain and every worldly ill, made perfect by suffering, by self-crucifixion *atoned*,—at one with God. We perceive how far this ideal of manhood transcends all others; we accept it as the highest to which man can attain, as the deification of the human; we feel our human nature renewed by the blood of Christ, drawn to the crucified as its apotheosis, the realization of its utmost power.

3. Christ draws us by revealing with the cross the true significance of sorrow, thus reconciling the soul to inevitable ill, and persuading to the renunciation of the selfish, carnal, pleasure-seeking, earth-bound life. Man is by nature epicurean; he regards pleasure as his natural right,

evil as a cross accident, a needless imposition, instead of a necessary element in the scheme of things. So long as we indulge this view, we add new poignancy to inevitable woes, and lose our life in vain attempts to save it. Suffering is not an accident, but a fixed part and a necessary constituent of human life, which, though we escape it for a season, we must sometime abide, and which it is better to accept with patient endurance than to fight against with useless strife. We must be reconciled to sorrow, before we can be truly reconciled to God. This is the doctrine of the cross, that mystic symbol which God has set up in the midst of human history, a type of all earthly grief and pain. To the frank and reverential acceptance of that symbol we are invited by the contemplation of Christ in his humiliation and passion. "If any man come to me, and hate not his own life, he cannot be my disciple; and whoso doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." Closely connected with this idea of self-renunciation is that of sacrifice. The death of Christ is a sacrifice, not in the sense of vicarious satisfaction, but of self-immolation. And this is the meaning of all ritual sacrifice. The sacrifices which form so prominent a feature in the ancient religions, Jewish and Gentile, meant the same thing. They were symbolical. They typified, by the shedding of blood, the seat of the soul, the putting away of self, the seat of sin,—the shedding of the selfish, sinful nature by which we are separated from God, and the renunciation of which is atonement with him. This idea the New Testament transferred from the blood of lambs and goats to the blood of Christ. "Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

To the sacrifice of self, then, we are exhorted by the cross of Christ. His sacrifice is only then effective as

atonement for us, when reproduced, as it were, in our own life. So long as there remains in us a principle of action that rebels against God, so long as our wills are opposed to his, so long do we resist the drawing of the cross, and are unreconciled to God in Christ. But when we feel in our hearts that divine attraction, and respond to it with our lives; when self is offered up, and the will of God has become to us in theory the supreme good; and our life, by voluntary sacrifices for duty's sake, illustrates our theory with practical obedience,—then we are not only partakers in the great historical atonement in Christ, but we, too, according to the grace that is given us, atone for others, and, as far as our influence extends, become a sacrifice and a propitiation for the sins of men.

Christianity has been termed a "worship of sorrow." Whatever of truth or of error there may be in that phrase, thus much is undoubtedly true, that the deepest in Christ is best known to those who, with strong sympathy, partake of his passion and enter into his death. Who bear the dying of the Lord Jesus, in them is made manifest his life. There is one view of life which represents happiness as the true end and only good, which bids us shun sorrow, and take our fill of earthly pleasure. There is another view which represents duty as the chief end and good, and teaches us to take up the yoke of necessary ill. These were the opposite views of ancient philosophy, "the Epicureans and the Stoicks," the latter of which is Christian as far as it goes. But the gospel teaches a diviner wisdom: it teaches not only to bear with patience inevitable ill, but voluntarily to renounce something of earthly pleasure and worldly possessions for the sake of other and higher satisfactions,—our own and others' spiritual good. It teaches, in a parable of sorrow, the mystery of life. It sets up a cross by the way, and bids us crucify our love of pleasure and of self.

Great is the import of the cross in the Christian scheme. Nothing more signally illustrates the exterior triumph and historical success of the gospel than that reverend symbol, which, once abhorred and accursed,—an instrument of torture, a sign of guilt and an emblem of shame,—has become a glory and a grace and an idol of the world. Once forbidden within the fold of civil walls, and approached with horror and trembling through the “execrable gates” of cities, it has come to flaunt on regal brows; it crowns the solemn temple; it flames in the battle’s van; it glitters on beauty’s breast; it is curiously carved in wood and stone; it is framed of jewels and gold. In the centre of the Flavian Amphitheatre in Rome, once the stronghold of polytheism, it occupies the ground where the followers of the crucified were thrown to the lions, or transfixed with the sword. All who behold it revere and bless it. So mightily has the name of the crucified prevailed over the names and kingdoms of the world. The symbol has triumphed: how fares it with the truth which that symbol imports? The name has conquered, but what of the way and the life? The cross which piety honors, and which saving faith embraces, is not that which is made with hands and figured to the eye, but that which is borne in the heart and the life.

It was said by one of the wisest of the moderns, that “only with renunciation can life be truly said to begin.” On other grounds, and in quite another spirit, Christ says, “He that seeketh his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.” “I beseech you, therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies—your lives—a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, unto the Lord, which is your reasonable service.”

FOURTH SERIES.]

[No. 5

P R A Y E R.

BY

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P R A Y E R.

BY REV. R. P. STEBBINS, D.D.

IN this age of intense activity,—accumulating riches with feverish anxiety, extending the boundaries of science in all directions with astonishing rapidity, and dispensing charities with a profusion akin to the Divine beneficence,—there is danger of disregarding and forgetting our connection with the unseen and eternal. Man is not only an efficient actor: he is an abundant receiver. Influences flow into him as well as out of him. Heavenly dews descend upon the soul as well as upon the soil. Man aspires as well as plans. He is conscious of the spiritual as well as of the material. He is conscious of his dependence as well as of his strength. He lifts his soul in prayer as well as his hand in labor. He feels his kinship with the skies. “Alone, of all earthly beings,” says an eminent statesman, “man prays. Among his moral instincts, there is none more natural, more universal, more invincible, than prayer. The child cherishes it with a warm earnestness. The old flee to it as to a refuge against decay and loneliness. Prayer rises spontaneously upon young lips which can hardly lisp the name of God, and upon dying lips too feeble to pronounce it. Among all peoples, celebrated or obscure, civilized or barbarous, one encounters at every

step acts and forms of invocation. Everywhere where man lives, in certain circumstances, at certain hours, under the control of certain impulses of the soul, the eyes are raised, hands are joined, knees are bent, to implore or give thanks, to adore or deprecate. With transport or with trembling, publicly or in the privacy of his heart, man betakes himself to prayer in the last resort, to fill the emptiness of his soul, or to relieve the burdens of his lot: it is in prayer that he seeks, when every thing else fails him, support in his feebleness, consolation in his griefs, and hope for his virtue." The soul as naturally pours itself in prayer as the mountain bird warbles, or the mountain spring overflows. The religious experience of all ages and nations is indeed redolent with devotion and prayer. Jesus not only consecrated the mountain and the desert by his prayers, but he prayed with his disciples. Paul and Silas made the prison a temple by their prayers. Prayer was made without ceasing by the saints. At the grave; by the bed of the dying; in the chamber of sickness; in the hour of separation when friends were parted; in the day of return which welcomed them home; in festive hours, when the heart was joyous, and the day bright; in sorrow, when the spirit fainted and the heart was riven; in every condition of retirement and society, of hope and fruition, of prosperity's blessing or adversity's blight; everywhere where there was a blessing to seek or be grateful for, a want felt and to be supplied,—there was the place, then was the hour, for prayer.

I know, that some persons, especially the young, think there is a shadow, a sadness, covering the hour of prayer. As well might one speak of sadness when the child pours its griefs into its mother's bosom, and finds relief; or floods her ears with tones of joy, and deepens and lengthens its bliss thereby. I know that when sin has mottled

the soul's whiteness, and conscience accuses us of wrong, the petition for forgiveness falters on our lips, and we look up timidly, speak tremblingly, still in hope, still in faith; but the nearer we approach the mercy-seat, the greater our assurance, the warmer our fervor, till the hesitating petition for pardon is changed into ardent gratitude for acceptance. As the erring child hesitates and halts as it approaches its father whom it has wronged, and shrinks and trembles as it implores forgiveness, looking timidly up into his face, rendered indistinct by its tears, to read the expression of acceptance or rejection, yet at last rushes confidently and joyfully into his extended arms, and, thrilled with delight, reposes on his bosom as it sees the benignant smile and hears the encouraging word; so the sinning soul may feel sad, and tremble and hesitate, when at a distance he resolves to seek his Father's house and blessing, and sees the green, fresh fields, and the paternal mansion, and the open door, and the Infinite Father from afar: but, when he approaches, his fears diminish as the distance diminishes, till his sobs of penitence are changed into outpourings of trust and of gratitude. No: the hour of prayer is not an hour of sadness; the place of prayer is not a place of darkness: it is an hour of deep and holy peace and joy; it is a place of transfiguration bathed in light from Heaven. Calmness, serenity, usually fill the soul. Sometimes, however, the billows of sorrow may so break over us that sharp agony may pain us; but angels will visit us, as they did Jesus, and still the storm, and give us peace. Or, on the other hand, our joy may be so deep, so thrilling, that ecstasy may fill the hour and heart; but, after we have poured our gushing gratitude into the inclining ear of the Father, a serene, a tranquil joy succeeds our exultation. This is one of the eminent blessings of prayer: it gives serenity, calmness, peace, trust,

after the anxieties of expectancy, the exultations of success, the agonies of sorrow and bereavement. And such hours are the most precious. The deepest and most desirable and most permanent joy is not where the laughter and song are loudest. These are superficial and temporary. These are ripples, eddies, on the surface of joy, showing its shallowness, not its depths. We are always pensive and thoughtful when we are most happy. As the tidal wave climbs up the shore, hour by hour, when not a ripple ruffles the surface of the water till it fills and floods every waiting pool and winding inlet; so the serene joys of devotion, though no music murmurs on the lips, no laughter sparkles in the eye, bathe and refresh the thirsty recesses of the aspiring soul.

I say, then, that the hour of prayer is a pleasant hour: it is as the small rain upon the tender herb, as the gentle dew upon the thirsty plant.

But *why? wherefore? What is* prayer, that it will make us thus tranquil and joyous, thus calm and trustful? What is prayer, that it purifies and exalts us, helps us to live worthily and hopefully? What is it, that the young should kneel in their buoyancy and brightness; that the joyful should gather at its shrine, and offer thanksgiving; that the sad should look upward, and dry their tears; that morning should be welcomed by its voice, and evening made fragrant by its incense?

To pray is to ask for what we need, to return thanks for what we receive, to implore forgiveness for our sins. It is to seek guidance in difficulty, strength in weakness, wisdom in ignorance, aid in duty. It is to invoke a blessing upon past endeavors, and help in future undertakings: it is to commit ourselves, and all whom we love, trustfully to our heavenly Father's care. Prayer is not a cold, formal repetition of words, at set times, in set tones, in

consecrated places. It is the gushing-up of the soul's desires, the overflowing of the soul's gratitude, the struggling confession of its short-comings, the expression of its resolves, its consecrations. It is an irrepressible sense of want seeking supplies from the Infinite Fulness. It is aspiration climbing along the craggy pathways to the Fountain of all joys and fruitions.

“Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear,
The upward glancing of an eye,
When none but God is near.”

Emotions may take the place of speech, and aspiration of petition.

When prayer is offered unitedly in the congregation, the penitence, the gratitude, the petition, are embodied in words by him who leads the devotions, so that all hearts can join in one request, utter one thanksgiving; and thus all things be done decently and in order. But, when one prayeth alone, all form is disregarded, and man speaketh freely to his heavenly Father. No other voice is to join with his, no other hearts are to be lifted heavenward by his devotions. His words, if words he uses, are his own. All restraint is removed. The filial spirit overflows and enjoys. In a word, which comprehends all and expresses all, prayer is a child's intercourse with its parent,—so free, so confiding, so joyous, so natural.

I need not pause here, and ask if this is not an elevating, refining, gratifying service,—a holy privilege as well as a sacred duty. Is it strange that men should pray? Is it wonderful even that prayer should sometimes become

a superstition, and its form a charm? So natural, so spontaneous is it, that the wonder rather is that men do not pray always and everywhere. It is wonderful, passing strange, that one can doubt and hesitate, and refuse to pray; that he can do such violence to his nature as to suppress its aspirations heavenward, and restrain the word of devotion which rushes to his lips. This is wonderful: this is strange.

This fact teaches us *why* we should pray. It is because we *cannot help it*, unless we do, or have already done, a grievous wrong to our natures. These upward yearnings must be gratified, these aspirations heavenward must ascend, the necessity of aid must be relieved, or the soul, through all its vital tissues, will feel the wrong. How low must one have sunk who never feels them! How the turbid currents of worldliness and appetite must have torn in their fury, and clogged in their foulness, all the tissues of that spirit which neither feels gratitude for success, nor a disposition to express it if felt; who neither recognizes, nor if recognized will acknowledge, the presence and providence of God in his blessings or his sorrows; who lives an orphan under the very shadow of his Father's protecting hand! God in mercy quicken such hearts, unseal such eyes, that they may behold his presence and feel his care!

I go further than this. I not only affirm that prayer is a *natural* act of man, and that to restrain prayer would be doing violence to his highest nature: I say also, that this spirit of devotion **MUST BE NURTURED** to be healthy, to be preserved even. As to all other emotions and affections, so to this neglect brings disease, feebleness, extinction. Exercise, indulgence, is the life of the emotions. We must aspire, or we shall grovel: We must pray filially, or we shall pray profanely. We must adore, or

we shall blaspheme. We must soar where the seraphs sing, or we shall sink where the serpents hiss. If a devout, a grateful spirit is natural and holy, then it becomes a duty, a necessity, to watch its inspirations, to diligently cherish every devotional impulse, and pour our souls in prayer when the spirit breathes upon us.

More than this: We should pray because *devotion is the mother of other virtues*, consecrates all virtues. It makes fragrant other services of heart and hand, as the cedar-tree perfumes all the grove. It clarifies the intellect and warms the heart; it invigorates resolution and insures performance; it repels temptation and inspires goodness. Let experience speak.

Here is a man about to enter upon the duties of the day. He has laid his plans, and is about to execute them. He is to-day going to take advantage of the weakness and ignorance of his neighbor, and wrong him of both estate and reputation, not in violation of law, but according to law,—according to its letter, not according to its spirit. The hour of prayer comes. He prays: he asks a blessing on the day's duties and labors; he hesitates; he pauses. “Pray for hardness and deceit? pray for aid from the Father to wrong his child?” Never, never! The scheme is abandoned, the stain on the soul's whiteness bleached by repentance. The transaction, when seen in the light of the Father's countenance, is transformed from attractiveness to repulsiveness, from lawful barter to a brother's robbery.

Again: Here is one who has been wronged,—deeply, sorely wronged,—and he not only has not forgiven the wrong, he is seeking revenge, not recompense; he is plotting how he may take it. He discovers a way; and he exults, that, before the next day's sun goes down, he shall taste the sweets of retaliation, give in full measure in-

jury for injury. Before he closes his eyes in sleep, he prays for protection, for forgiveness. The words of that simple yet comprehensive prayer of our Saviour are on his lips : “ Forgive me my trespasses as I forgive those who trespass against me.” — “ What ! is this the ground of pardon ? How can I thus pray ? Is it not solemn mockery to pray for forgiveness if I do not forgive ? to seek for mercy when I show no mercy ? ” The burning passion cools ; the cherished revenge is cast out ; the victim of his hatred becomes the object of his pity and forgiveness ; and so prayer repels the tempter, rescues from wrong-doing.

He who daily prays must live virtuously. I do not say, he who daily utters the words and takes the posture of prayer, but he who *prays*. No man, living in daily violation of what he believes to be the will of his heavenly Father, can ask that Father’s aid. Will the evil-doer invoke the presence and the benediction of God on his evil deeds ? Never, till his nature is inverted, and all his moral instincts are dead. Prayer, then, is our refuge in temptation : we are rescued from evil-doing thereby.

More than this : Prayer is more than a strong-hold in which we are secure.

“ The closet which the saint devotes to prayer
Is not his tower only, but his temple,
Whither he goes for blessing and renewal.”

We should pray because the soul is invigorated by it. Our good resolutions are strengthened, our prostrate faith is lifted up. The labor which seemed so difficult that we shrank from it is now undertaken with ardor ; for the Omnipotent One is our helper. Our loneliness is relieved by the Father’s presence. We become pure by a consciousness of the presence of Infinite Purity : all low, unworthy, selfish purposes and desires are put far away from us, and loftier, nobler, fraternal desires and purposes take their

place. And often, in the hour of devotion, we find strength to rise above the passions and appetites which before and elsewhere had ruled us with such despotic power. The more pervasive our devotion, the more entire our self-control, the more complete our self-mastership. These are the results of prayer flowing from our nature, originating in it.

But God is not inactive. He helps us. We are not only cheered by the consciousness of his approbation, but we are lifted by his hand, taught by his inspiration, sanctified by his spirit. God gives while we seek. Is not our heavenly Father more willing to give good gifts to those who ask him, than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children? Do you ask how he can? Has he not the power, who guideth Arcturus and his sons, and looseth the bands of Orion? Has he not the blessing, whose is the earth, and the fulness thereof, and the glory of the firmament? "Will he hear us?" Has he not said it in his word? has he not written it on the living tablet of our hearts? has he not promised it by implanting this ineradicable instinct in our souls, in all souls? Has the infinite Father mocked the hopes, the trust, of his child? Never, oh, never! God answers our prayers. We may be assured of receiving what we ask for in filial trust; or what is better than that for which we ask, when we ask amiss. Prayer is not, as the philosophers tell us, simply self-excitation, chafing the skin, irritating the throat, fretting the emotions, the blessedness of making moral muscle by struggling at our shoe-latchets to lift ourselves to heaven. Oh, no, no! it is no such folly as that. It is asking favor of God; and he gives it. The blessing of prayer is not simply improving our vocabulary of devotion, and hallowing our emotions by a thoughtfulness of God's presence. The blessing of prayer is more

than this, much more than this. It is a gift bestowed because it was sought, and so in our weakness we are made strong. God breathes upon the upward-looking spirit, and we are refreshed. As a child does not ask its father for a favor simply from the pleasure of being in its father's presence, and addressing him; so God's child does not pray simply for the joy which the privilege gives, but for the blessing which the Father has promised to bestow upon those who ask him.*

When should we pray, then, if such is the blessedness, such the spirit, of prayer? We should pray when we feel our need; when the trials of life press upon us and we want help; when the blessings of life are heaped upon us, and gratitude rises to our lips. When adversity overtakes us, let us pray for courage; when prosperity showers abundance, let us offer thanksgiving; when morning dawns, let us implore aid in our duties; when evening darkens, let us seek forgiveness for the wrong, acceptance of the right, and protection in our sleep. In the retirement of solitude, let us pray: there, the flame of devotion burns most steadily, most purely, and ascends to heaven most swiftly. But we may pray elsewhere. In the midst of toil, we may send up a devout aspiration, offer a hearty thanksgiving. But he who prays nowhere else save in the crowd, under the burden of toil, amidst the tumult of the multitude, will find his offering poor and his incense earthly. Solitude must often be sought, that fresh fire

* I cannot persuade myself that it is necessary to say a word respecting the object of prayer, to whom our prayers should be addressed. Our blessed Lord has taught all who are willing to be taught, "Pray to thy Father."—"After this manner pray ye, Our Father."—"In that day ye shall ask me nothing: verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you."—"For this cause," says Paul, "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Let this suffice.

from heaven may descend, and kindle the sacrifice. But we need not always pray there. Surrounded by the clamor of the world, the din of business, the shouts of the rushing throng, our aspirations may sometimes go up gratefully to heaven, as did the cloud of incense from the golden altar in the temple on Moriah, though hostile hosts surrounded it, and the shout of battle rolled and reverberated through its pillared courts. In the midst of the collisions and strifes of the market and the court, the rumbling of wheels and the din of machinery, the expectant ear may hear the answering words of peace and deliverance, as the longing, watching maiden, at the desperate siege of Lucknow, amid the thunder of artillery, the groans of the wounded, and the cries of the starving, caught the distant pibroch note, prophecy and promise of rescue and salvation. Pray, then, everywhere. Pray when peril confronts us, and we faint. Pray when sickness weakens us, and we despair. Pray at the marriage where young hearts are pledged for ever.

“Kneel down by the side of the tearful fair,
And strengthen the perilous hour with prayer.”

Pray when the young mother imprints the holy kiss on the brow of her first-born ;—

“Hour of bliss when the heart o'erflows
With rapture a mother only knows.”

Pray when the generous son, brother, father, husband, go forth from the sanctuary of home, to seek their fortune, or discharge their duty, in distant fields, on distant seas ;—

“For the perils of sea and perils of field
Sad harvests of sorrow and sadness may yield.”

Pray when the soul is unfolding its wings for paradise,—

“And commend the spirit to God who gave;
Lifting the thoughts from the cold, dark grave.”

Pray in the assembly of the people, when families go up to the sanctuary in company;—

“For the hallowed hour that God has blest
Invites to prayer with its welcome rest.”

Pray everywhere, with all prayer and supplication. Let all pray that sorrow may be turned into joy, and joy be hallowed by gratitude. Let all pray that youth may be fragrant with excellence, and age mature with virtue, that both blossom and fruit may be acceptable to God our Father.

“Child, amidst the flowers at play,
While the red light fades away;
Mother, with thine earnest eye,
Ever following silently;
Father, by the breeze of eve
Called the harvest work to leave;
Pray! ere yet the dark hours be,
Lift the eye and bend the knee.”

Oh! what hour is there of life’s duties or life’s joys, life’s sorrows or life’s successes, which does not invite to prayer? It purifies the temple of the heart, which becomes thereby a sanctuary for the abode of the Father. Here, it is true, as we pilgrims journey to our rest, tears of penitence mingle with our offerings of gratitude; as we climb the heights of deliverance, sighs are wafted upward with our thanksgivings:—

“But the ransomed shout to their glorious King,
Where no sorrow shades the soul as they sing:
A sinless and joyous song they raise,
And their voice of prayer is eternal praise.”

Oh, let us, by devout prayerfulness, and heavenly aspiration, and perpetual thanksgiving, be ready to join them in their lofty anthem, to mingle our incense of gratitude with their chorus of praise!

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[No. 6.

BAPTISM.

BY

REV. L. J. LIVERMORE.

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BAPTISM.

BY REV. L. J. LIVERMORE.

THE purpose of this article is to state, in a very summary form, what we suppose to be the prevailing views among us on the subject of Baptism, touching only on the leading points of evidence sufficiently to make clear the nature of our faith.

The practice of baptism, as a symbol of moral purpose and religious conviction, is supposed to have originated from the use of water in bathing, and as a means of ceremonial cleanliness. It is believed to have been customary to baptize converts to Judaism, as one step in their initiation into the privileges of the Jewish Church. That it was a rite already in use among the Jews, and with a somewhat definite religious signification, appears from the way in which John is said to have come baptizing, without any thing to intimate or suggest that it was a novelty originated by him. The same is also indicated by Christ's words to Nicodemus, in John, third chapter, fifth verse; for, if Nicodemus had not already been used to this form, such an answer would not have been intelligible to him. Christ alludes to the rite as something his hearer would understand. Baptism was a symbol peculiarly intelligible and

expressive to the people of a warm climate, where water was comparatively scarce, and its use indispensable almost equally for health and comfort.

When John came preaching in the remoter country regions of Judea, — conscious of a religious inspiration and mission, and looking for the speedy appearing of the Redeemer, — he found this symbol of moral and religious renewal already familiar to the people. It was well adapted to give point and permanence to the religious feelings he awakened. It defined the nature and purpose of his call to them, in a clearer and more effective way than verbal statements alone could do it. John's baptism is sometimes spoken of as the baptism of or to repentance ; but this does not carry the inference that the symbolic meaning of the rite, as he used it, was penitence. The symbol had reference to the purer life which was to follow. It was not a confession of past sins, but a pledge of future piety and righteousness. Only as such could Jesus have received the rite. It was in him the formal recognition of John's right to preach of the truth which he proclaimed, and a type of his own consecration to a holy life. For others, it was a baptism of repentance, because the sinful can only come to righteousness through repentance. Reformation is to them the condition of subsequent holiness of life. John's baptism was also called the baptism of repentance, because he enjoined this as the means of grace ; while Christian baptism was associated with higher views of the divine presence and help.

The same reasons which made this rite suitable for John's purposes commended it to Jesus. Almost as soon as he began to have disciples, the disciples began to baptize. There is no reason to doubt this baptism was in the name of Jesus ; that is, it implied a receiving of him so far as his work was then manifest. When the Lord's earthly

task was completed, he left this to his disciples as the plainest outward sign of faith in him. Its meaning to the Christian convert lay not in any implied confession of past sins, or any supposed power in the rite to make him clean. It was his formal reception of a new teacher, and a new life,—a life of moral purity and of religious consecration. By receiving baptism in the name of Jesus, he signified that the purer life to which he pledged himself was made to appear to him his duty through the teachings of Christ; that he believed in Jesus as one sent from God, as his Lord and Master; and, because believing so, that he took on himself the duty of living according to the commands of Jesus. The ordinance carried with itself a meaning varying according to each convert's measure of Christian faith and understanding. It stood for his pledge of faith and duty, and was equally the symbol of his participation in the grace and privileges of the gospel.

Baptism came to be an ordinance of the Christian Church, not because of any essential value in itself,—not because Jesus Christ saw in it, of itself, any spiritual value,—but as a form or symbol, the meaning of which was already familiar to those around him, and therefore well adapted to serve as an expressive, intelligible, and visible sign and confession of faith in him as the Teacher and Redeemer of men. There is no proof that Jesus regarded the rite as an indispensable condition of salvation, or of a Christian faith and standing. The words already referred to, spoken to Nicodemus, are most reasonably explained, not as enforcing a double necessity of baptism and of spiritual regeneration, but one necessity,—the moral and religious birth, of which the washing of water was the recognized symbol and the spirit of God the efficient cause, in opposition to the Jewish trust in natural descent from Abraham. Any thing so contrary to the general tenor of Christ's teaching as

the absolute necessity of an outward and ritual observance can be received only on the authority of an express declaration. There is no such express declaration of the indispensableness of baptism. If Paul had regarded this rite as the invariable and necessary condition of a Christian position and salvation, expressly enjoined and instituted by the Lord, he could not have said, "Christ sent me not to baptize." His way of speaking of it shows that he looked on it as a thing of subordinate importance,—as a sign, which, being in use and well understood, and approved by the Lord, should be observed, but to be carefully restrained to its proper use as a symbol only; that he avoided any views that seemed to attribute to it any efficacy other than as a sign and pledge of a new and better life after it.

With regard to the method of baptism, there is nothing to prove that the form was considered material,—nothing to make it certain that any one form was exclusively used. It is not improbable that it was often by immersion. Habits and conditions peculiar to that age and climate made this a far less inconvenient and otherwise objectionable form than in our time and situation. Several recorded instances of baptism are such as most naturally to be understood of some other method than immersion,—as that of Paul, just rising from a long season of prostration and fasting; that of the jailer's family; and perhaps that of the great multitude added to the Church at Pentecost. But whatever the practice was at that time, it is contrary to the essential nature of the gospel to suppose any religious importance to be in a precise imitation. No Church in the world, it is probable, observes the Lord's Supper in precisely the same way that it was first observed. Yet Christians do not any the less believe that they are obeying the precept of the Master. The idea is the essential thing.

"The flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you are spirit and are life." So baptism, being a symbol, may, with obvious propriety, vary to suit the physical circumstances of person and place. In some cases, it is obviously impracticable to administer the rite by immersion. It cannot be thought that Christ meant to make spiritual ends depend on uncertain material conditions. We believe it is actually following Christ, to assert our freedom from an unvarying rule of form, while we aim to preserve the moral and spiritual significance.

With regard to the baptism of children in infancy, we hold that the New Testament does not give any explicit information. The words in Acts viii. 16, taken in connection with what immediately precedes, and interpreted in the light of what is well known to have been the custom of the Jews, create a strong presumption that children were baptized then and there by the apostle, or under his immediate direction. The words of ver. 16 are most obviously explained as a reason for the precept of the preceding verse, and as intended to meet a doubt, which some might feel, whether Christian baptism was meant for children as well as adults. The several instances where households are said to have been baptized, as if following the lead and example of the head of the family, strengthen the presumption. Moreover, this has been the practice of the Church from the earliest times of which we have record. The first fathers allude to the custom, as that which was in general use, and derived from the traditions of the apostles. They discuss questions as to time and other conditions, but not as to the fitness of the custom itself. We favor this practice also on grounds of reason, which are good in the absence of express precept to the contrary, as significant of the divinely ordained connection between the life of the parent and that of the children; and symbolic of the gen-

eral law, that children of faithful Christian parents grow up believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We do not regard the baptism of the young as a completed thing, until, being brought up in the knowledge of God and the Saviour, and having attained to the power of acting and judging for themselves, they openly and freely adopt the act of their parents as their own. The significance of infant baptism depends much on our faith in the Church as the organic and perpetually renewed body of Christ,—one, though ever changing,—and resting on the divinely appointed continuity of human life. The children of Christian parents are born into the Church of Christ. They are the Lord's. Baptism does not make the bond. It declares it, and pledges the parent to fidelity in his efforts to make it a lasting and complete union by the Christian nurture and instruction of his offspring.

We regard baptism as only a symbol, in itself of no effect, as signing the pledge is in the case of one who abandons the use of alcohol. This symbol is of higher respect than any other, as pertaining to the most momentous interests and duties, and as sanctioned by the example and authority of the Head of the Church. It is not formality to adhere to it, there being no objection to it, when it is held free from superstitious notions, either as to its efficacy or its form; and, on the other hand, there being many good reasons for continuing it. Those rather are formalists, who, like the Quakers, make a *point*, and therefore a *form*, of rejecting all forms. It is the only visible mark of the unity of the Church,—one Lord, one baptism. It is a plain, easy, intelligible way of performing a universal duty, that of openly confessing faith in Christ; an equally intelligible sign of the pure and righteous life to which the Christian pledges himself. Coming to us from Christ, and

administered in his name, it is a means of expressing, and therefore a means of strengthening, the sense of our union with him. It continues and visibly expresses the unity of the Church as the fellowship of believers in one Saviour, believers in God the Father through Christ the Son. We offer and urge it on the unbaptized, not as an avowal of holiness attained, or a saving change already wrought, but, after the apostles' custom, as a simple act of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Teacher and Redeemer; the law of our higher and better life, when life in its strength is ours; and the ground of a hope triumphant over sickness and the fear of death.

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BY REV. J. WEISS.

THE only way to arrive at any clear conceptions of our relations with a spiritual world is by first defining the words which we use in speaking of this subject. When we come to examine a good many of our opinions, we find that they are only marks of our want of precision in the use of words, and of our habit to be satisfied with phrases. The word "spiritual," and the phrase "kingdom of heaven," have lent, by their vagueness, peculiar temptation to our taste for sentiments that have not been clarified and severely defined by reflection. We often prefer an illusion to a mental effort that dissipates it; and it is safe to say, that human opinions on every subject contain a great body of floating, ill-digested, half-grown thinking and feeling. Surely, in all matters that relate to the religious life, and that involve some of our tenderest and most lofty emotions, we ought to strive to shift our faith from words to facts, if it be possible for the mind, in its present condition, to furnish such facts to the consciousness. We ought to be sure, too, that the facts are universal in their character, — not exceptional or abnormal states either of the body or of the soul, but true for all people, at all times and in all places, like the facts of a science or the daily necessities of life.

What do we mean, then, by using the word "spiritual"? Sometimes, as when we speak of a highly spiritual person or poem or piece of music or work of art, we simply contrast a refined quality with a coarse and ordinary one.—something subtle with something mechanical and material. We mean that it is the manifestation of a delicate, highly cultivated, noble, and pure mind. But, when we use the phrase "spiritual world," we mean, or ought to mean, two distinct things,—first, that inner condition of human ideas, emotions and aspirations, which creates that kind of person whom we call spiritual. It is the invisible state of the mind and heart which has the power to become visible in acts, audible in words, and appreciable in character. It is shut up somewhere within the bodily limits of the individual; being at once a refined brain and the soul that refined it. Its existence may be suspected from the looks and gestures; but it never fairly leaps into visibility, and becomes a portion of the material world, until there is some expressiveness of words and actions. Then it adds something to society, and passes in the form of benefits into history. But, previously, it is like a secret, or a hidden motive. So all the texts in the New Testament, which declare that the kingdom of God is within us, allude to an enlightenment and a refinement of the inner man, with which the will of God most gladly and easily connects itself. And it has become a Christian habit of speech to say, that the wise and good man is in heaven now; meaning only, or as it ought to mean only, that somewhere within his bodily limits is the invisible harmony and repose that just thoughts and pure desires create. If we try to imagine, that, although he is still upon the earth and bound by his whole organization to a visible career, his soul can ever be somewhere else, not within the limits where thought exercises itself and applies itself to visible

things, but in some distinct state or society, we imagine an impossibility. Our thoughts may attack the material universe in every direction, with the telescope to overcome greatness and vastness, with the microscope to detect minuteness: but the man who thinks is still within the limits of the visible and material world. He simply makes a long arm, and brings the planet and the atom near; and, even while he is discovering the laws which bind planets and atoms into one harmonious whole, he has not broken through the roof of his brain, nor the roof of the material universe. For, as two bodies cannot be in the same place at once, so a man cannot be in two places at the same time: he may dream that he is, or it may be the illusion of a fever, or the unreality which sometimes springs out of an impaired condition of the nervous system. But every healthy human being, though his soul is invisible until it begins to act, is in a visible world alone while he is the tenant of a visible body.

But, in the second place, when we use the phrase "spiritual world," we mean to indicate the place or sphere into which our spiritual and every other inner condition passes when the body is stripped away from our invisibility as the husk from the ripe ear. We then lose the material methods which have given expression to our inner thoughts and feelings. Matter resists us, and suffers our resistance, no longer; time ceases to become the measure of our acts and sensations; the outer world cannot furnish perceptions to the mind, because the avenues of the senses are choked with our bodies' dust. If the soul would continue its independent existence, and not be merged into blind currents of forces, or states of motion, it must be furnished with another set of senses correspondent to another set of impressions that are given by another relation between the universe and the soul. When language arrives

at this point, it finds that it has come unfurnished with a pontoon to bridge the difference between the present world which we know and some other condition of the world which we do not know. And the whole arsenal of language may be ransacked by thoughts the most curious, without yielding any help to waft, to float, or to propel us across that strait, — that difference between a soul in a body and a soul out of a body. If we are wise, we shall sit down upon the brink, and content ourselves with saying what the spiritual world is not and cannot be; knowing, that if there is one thing in heaven or earth that we shall be sure of, one riddle that every person will certainly find out for himself if he will be patient enough to wait for dying, it is this thing, — the life after death. In the mean time, we must talk about it by the artifice of negatives. We define it as a place that cannot now be seen and touched, that cannot now be occupied, whose air cannot vibrate to material ears, and to which no other ears have yet been opened. We define it as a condition that cannot be experienced with visible senses, into which the bodily organs cannot pass, and for which another set of organs has not been yet developed. The new organs may be all correspondent in intention and effect to the present ones; that is, in the spiritual world, contact, intercourse, perception, may be sustained by sight, hearing, touch, the smell, the taste. Perhaps they are sustained by the development of senses that we have not suspected, and that cannot be imagined. But we say that they do not yet exist. They cannot exist: the ground is pre-occupied. The soul can have but one body at a time, just as it can think but one thought, and experience but one feeling, at a time; for the most complex internal sensations have a unity, whose place cannot be occupied by another at the same time. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body, but not both at once; and one

cannot overlap or be entangled in the other. The soul must be entirely ignorant of the second body until it has ceased to use the first. And that use is never suspended while the heart propels the vital current ; never, in sleep nor in dreams ; never, in delirium nor disease ; never, in catalepsy nor the magnetic trance,— because another body, with another kind of uses, could not have pre-existed anywhere within the limits of the live material body, to cause a suspense of its uses. There is either one body or the other, but not both at once, with one soul for a tenant. No matter how curious the facts of somnambulism and automatic action of the brain may be, and those which arise from the brain's duality : they are all referable to one material body, and to the soul its ordinary tenant, who cannot quit without killing it,— who cannot have another till it is killed.

Now, we cannot decide how much of our inner life passes into this second place which we have attempted to define by negatives. Shall we carry our whole memory of persons, facts, and things, or shall we carry only the results which contact with these has incorporated in our character? Certainly all that depends upon knowledge of time, perception of distances, physical relations, must pass away ; all the body's nice learning of the properties of other bodies ; all its hunger and thirst, and its pleasurable excitements. Nothing that the senses pick up or enjoy can remain portions of the individual, unless it has been changed into invisible vitality,— that is to say, into knowledge of universal laws, into experience of the divine order that existed previous to things. But it is useless to pursue this speculation, because, if there is one point upon which we shall all be positively enlightened, it is this of what the soul will carry with it, and of what will die with the body,— in short, of how much will be left of us after death.

It is far more important to notice that the portion of our essence which survives cannot survive without organs. We shall see in the course of the argument why this is so important. There cannot be such a thing as a soul without a body. You cannot conceive of an animated person who has no form, no limits, no organs, no senses, no points of contact with other persons or things,—a mere expansion, a mere rarity. It would be the same as being a mere nonentity. Even a gas has its limits and properties, atomic relations of its parts, to be diffused by heat and contracted by cold, and actually solidified by pressure. Even the electric current will accumulate, and leap on its sincere path from point to point,—a spark, that can be measured and depicted. Nothing can save the soul from sinking into the blind forces of the world but the preservation of its identity; and that cannot be preserved without a frame to hold it,—a system of organs by which it can work and express itself. Where is our identity to-day? It is not independent of a body, not even in our sleep and dreams. It may lurk invisibly within the body; but this body it is that prevents your invisibility from becoming nonentity. And so it must always be.

Now, where are the organs which are to preserve your identity and your effectiveness, after the present set of organs shall have passed away? Is there to be a new, more sublimated kind of brain and nervous system? Where is it? Shall this new brain put forth new senses, to gather a new order of perceptions from some inside point of the universe; to lift the veils of color everywhere, and see the substance that was colored; to penetrate into structures everywhere, and see how they are constructed; to detect cohesion, to detect gravitation, to see vibrations, to flit with auroras, and ride with the twinkles of a star? Where are these new senses now? Imagine them as you

please, and attribute to them what functions you please ; but your answer to the question,— Where are they now ? — is very important. Do you assume that they lie compressed and folded within the bodily frame, to be liberated by dissolution, to be born into action through the travail of a death ? Then you must also assume, that, until the hour of death, there never can be a moment when these senses stir, because the ground is pre-occupied ; there is another set of stirring senses. We dream because the flow of blood excites different portions of the brain or of the spinal cord. We walk in our sleep under the same direction by which we walk in waking hours. We utter sense or folly in the magnetic trance by virtue of the same cerebral conditions which control our conscious speech. These conditions can be stimulated or depressed, but they can never be displaced by a new set of conditions till after death ; for the soul cannot live in two houses at once, if for no other reason than this,— that it has spent a life in learning how to live in one house, and cannot have learned how to live in another. The soul fits most perfectly and accurately into one set of senses : there is neither seam nor crevice,— nowhere a chance for thrusting in another set. Our earthly efficiency, our mental and moral sanity, the reliability of our information about the universe, depends upon this truth ; and it must always depend upon it, wherever we may be, either before or after death : we must be one person, with one set of senses that yields a uniform experience, else our usefulness and happiness have gone. Can there ever be a moment in this life when we have two bodies a going at once, by night or by day, in a trance or out of a trance ? Can our spiritual condition have two sets of organs during life ; one set relating to the visible, and the other to the invisible world ? Which is our life,— which set preserves the individual-

ity? The set which is appropriate to the world in which we live. A man might as well take off the whole of his flesh, and expect to carry on his business, as a soul might divest itself of its closely fitting organs, and expect to assume those which relate to another sphere.

We come now to the point in the argument where it makes its force felt against all the so-called spiritual communications and manifestations. Suppose your friend has died. Either the new senses of his second state are born through the dissolution of his body, or, what is more probable, his spiritual condition finds them in the invisible elements of the universe, and puts them on: he passes from a frame of flesh into a frame more subtly woven, without a single corporal characteristic in it, yet not without the character of matter. So to speak, blood will still tell,—that is to say, the finer soul will attract and use the finer body; what is symmetrical in character will flow into symmetry of form; what is piercing and intuitive will select its penetrating sense; what is lovely will gather the matter that may best express its graciousness. But flesh and blood cannot inherit this kingdom. How then, I ask, can this kingdom communicate with flesh and blood? I mean, how can your friend's second body influence your spiritual condition which has the first body still in use? It is impossible to imagine where the point of contact could be, if your second body is not yet developed. Suppose it is like an immature seed which lies at the bottom of a full-blown flower,—another flower could not bend over to shake its pollen upon yet unfolded petals. Each thing in the universe can only address its own kind: intercourse depends upon predestined mutuality, and mutuality depends upon similar and equally developed structures. If the bodily eye is framed to see material objects, how can another species of object—say,

your friend's second body — be perceived by it? And, as soon as you suppose that there is an eye within an eye,— a spiritual retina that frames images of objects that the material eye cannot perceive,— you suppose two sets of visual senses, and, to that extent, an activity of your second body inside your first body, and one soul in both. By and by, you will see your friend, when your senses are on his level and related to his own: but, till then, he must remain invisible; for there is a perfect adaptation throughout the universe. So, if the bodily ear is framed to receive vibrations from one atmosphere, it cannot receive them from another; and no fiction of an inner ear can give genuineness to voices and whispers of a spiritual tongue. Our friend who died may be in the same room with us, for aught we know; but the abyss between us is in the difference of our perceptive ability: not a pulse, not a hint, not the obscurest sensation, can weave one slender web across. For all purposes of communication, he might as well be on the solar system's farthest verge. All thrills and vague misgivings, all shudders and suspicions, all inexplicable horrors, are the body's nervous notions and unstrung conditions, interpreted by the very superstitions which they originated long ago. And what is that feeling of companionship that fills a lonely hour, that renewal of our vanished confidence, but the sudden freshet of a tender memory!

This difference of perceptive ability between the living and the dead friend makes it also impossible that the soul of the one should invisibly communicate with the soul of the other. Friends on earth can communicate without a word: a look may be enough; a flicker as of far summer lightning across the countenance, the raising of an eyelid, the faint deepening of a flush, may speak the volume that never will be written. Nay, more than this,

sensation emanates from another's presence: the silent love or hatred flashes invisibly; but there must be two visible points of bodies between which the errand travels to and fro. Our whole materiality is implicated in the most subtle and obscure of these sensations. Presence of bodies on the same level of condition is essential to them. But, when one of these bodies is annihilated, the soul that used it is just as much a prisoner within its new supernal senses as it was before, and just as incapable of acting beyond the limits that prescribe its new vitality.

This difference of sphere and of perceptive ability makes it also impossible that the soul of your departed friend should communicate with you through the mediumship of a third person, either by material sounds or by spiritual sensations. If a friend could communicate, he would do so directly with the soul that cherishes a love for him, and has suffered hours of unavailing longing for the precious boon of a token, a hint of intercourse, a confirmation that life still continues, and that it is filled with peace. What condition for the renewal of an interrupted love can be so favorable as the love itself? Yet the lover is sent to a stranger's house to gather news of his beloved, under the pretence that the stranger is an exceptional being, with some obscure capacity to be impressed,—whose whole organization can be possessed and used by another soul which has a different organization of its own. The medium's will is prostrate, his individuality has disappeared: where is his soul while the departed spirits are playing through his brain their various tunes? And what point of contact with his brain can the spirits have, when they are limited and imprisoned by new senses that work upon a new level, gathering new perceptions? Here is a most lamentable confusion, which no number of odd stories can justify, but which some

curious habits of the human brain may possibly interpret. And the whole tendency of the observations which deal with the cerebral and nervous structure of mankind is toward the classification of all singular phenomena under the head of physical functions. It is thus discovered that the healthy brain has unexpected powers, and that the diseased brain may play strange freaks; but the physical horizon still encloses all its activities. Nothing can be so irregular, nothing so curious, and, we may add, nothing so cunningly imagined and performed, as to cast a doubt upon the great distinction on which our health and usefulness depend,—that no soul can abdicate its senses, and no soul usurp the senses of another, and two kinds of perceptive ability cannot make an interchange of their respective experience.

If you owe your belief in immortality to the assumed facts of a spiritual intercourse, your belief is at the mercy of your assumption. It is not the vital necessity of your own soul, not a craving which justifies and demands its future satisfaction, but an opinion derived from a delusion. When the phenomena which attracted your attention, or the tricks which imposed upon your love of the marvellous, are explained, your immortality is also explained away. You did not derive it from a spiritual fact of your own consciousness; you did not build it out of reasonable judgments: you are at the mercy of a delusion. Can a delusion import a spiritual truth into your soul? Grant that we are all immortal, whether we believe it or not. We wish to believe it and to know it,—to see the horizon of our life expand, as it lifts and ennobles all our thoughts, justifies our love, and puts before our deeds a boundless career. Personal immortality is not an opinion drawn from a delusion; but it is the vital essence, conscious of its immutability and its destiny. Your opinion is worth

no more than the ordinary theological assent of men to that great fact. Withdraw the theology, and the truth comes toppling down. Withdraw your phenomena, and, for all you know, annihilation may have been the fate of those you loved, and may be your own.

It is said, that, if a man accepts a truth, the grounds of its acceptance are of no consequence. They may be false, and utterly unsubstantial, yet serve the purpose of conveying truth into the mind. What a confusion of ideas is this! Truth cannot have false grounds. Truth cannot be recommended or advocated by the pleas of a falsity. There is no spiritual truth that can be conveyed into the human mind by means of a delusion. Nothing is conveyed but the delusion, that has borrowed the name of the truth, without which it could not live an hour. Delusive appearances cannot stimulate a spiritual fact: there is no affinity between them. A spiritual truth is something that is continually alive: the fact of immortality is the personal life of the soul's higher powers. They cannot live upon a word that is imported into the mind; they do not spring from an opinion that the mind may hold. If you have broken away from the old creeds, pained by their want of human sympathy, and repelled by the narrowness of their opinions, do not substitute other opinions in their place; but let the fulness of your spiritual life wake up, to atone for the joy and peace which you have lost. One delusion is no better than another. They are all frail reeds, that break in your bosom as you lean upon them; and your life-blood slips through their wound. No falsity can ever endow truth with permanent accessions, either in the race or in the individual. The inspiring thought of immortality will depend upon the tricks of men or the diseases of the brain; the knowledge of the presence of God will become

obscured; and the last estate of the followers of delusion will be worse than their first indifference,—more painful than the hours when they agonized for a truth, and longed for a divine message, yet hastened to expend their generous human nature upon a lie.

It is sometimes affirmed, that the spiritual world makes impressions upon the human soul that are translated into messages of comfort, hope, truth, and admonition; that many visions and passages of spiritual experience resulted from the ability of the heavenly sphere to touch the soul at some point, and with that touch to electrify, to lift to some new purpose, to stimulate with some neglected truth, though no voice may be heard, no light shine, no beauteous appearance fascinate the eye; that the human brain must needs interpret by its own objective language these invisible adventures.

This leads me to speak of a possible influence which establishes a real relation with the spiritual world. But it must flow from some being who is not limited by a set of senses, and whose infinite presence supersedes the necessity for any kind of perceptive ability. Our true relation with the spiritual world is the one that we hold with the all-pervading God. And, in this respect, we stand on certain terms with God, as being immersed in nature, sharing the universal life with the planet and the tree, only more personally interesting and more paternally considered because we share the mind and love of the Creator. A human soul may be impressed by the Infinite Presence, because all its senses and faculties lie undefended, like every atom of the universe, from this great search of love. The difference between our perception and that of our dead friend is a wall of adamant between us, which vanishes before the touch of infinite power; and that may come where no friend can follow. No part of nature

has a barrier against the continuous inspiration which feeds all roots, mounts through every artery, and blossoms in the history of the infusoria and of the nations.

Therefore, although we see plainly that our life is ruled by laws, and that a healthy human experience is the one that derives all its perceptions from the regular system of the physical and mental world, God may also have a law by which he elects to touch some waiting heart, to send a waft of breath to freshen the channel of a gift, to accumulate power above an earthly crisis, to affirm each man's sincerity, to be so pitiful as to be imagined speaking to a bruised heart, to teem with such suggestions as to be described by genius as a lightning-bolt that cleaves the midnight. But here also superstition may set in. It is better to trust that human nature has been divinely created to be adequate to its emergencies, and that the laws of experience report the equable and changeless pressure of the Almighty Mind.

What, then, should we seek from dead friends if the elements of a spiritual world are already in our souls? and what can they give to us, of knowledge or comfort, that the Infinite Presence does not give, as it anticipates all pettier advantages? The greater *excludes* the less. Incessant nourishment arrives at every root which our personality throws out towards the visible world, and towards the wisdom that sustains it. From our coarsest sense to our finest intuitive feeling for truths or laws, there is perfect adequacy, perfect adjustment; and there ought to be a perfect self-possession, arising from our trust in the presence of God. Those who have it find that it is superfluous to grope after an intercourse that would be useless if it were not impossible; for all that we love, whether it has vanished and shut the doors of new senses upon us, or whether it still resides with us, is embraced by the love

of God, and for ever preserved to our advantage. This trust holds back the tenderest human longing from despair: it is willing to wait, because it is conscious of its own immortality; it can afford to wait, because it is content with the present manifestation of the spiritual world in the soul. Nothing is so wonderful to it, nothing that lifts to so much awe, nothing charged with so much rapture, as the soul's own share of God's heaven, its love, hope, and justice which the mighty finger frames, its inextinguishable sense that it can never die, and that no dear and excellent thing can die. God holds them all; God wraps his reserve around the holiest things: they are only yielded up to hope and patience; they are unspeakably disgraced when delusion makes dice of them, and throws them for a living. Let us rise to a sense of the dignity of our own nature, which makes us perfectly at home wherever we are, fitted for our place, endowed with appropriate senses, incapable of usurping other senses or of being usurped by them. And the Infinite Father ponders every step we take, as he conducts us from mansion to mansion, judiciously opening before us each door that lies upon our great career.

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IT is common to represent Jesus as leaving the infinite serenity in which he dwelt, and, moved with a Divine compassion, taking upon himself the form of man and the varied endurance of life, that so he might bring man out of sin. That may be good poetry, but it is not good truth. On the other hand, I do not think that the bald idea of Jesus as one "sent," though a nearer, is quite the whole, truth. It is so that he speaks of himself, and so that his disciples speak of him. But there was a certain *voluntariness* about his mission which we lose sight of when we regard him as simply the follower of an inexorable law, and only coming to man's help because he was "sent." I cannot fathom Divine council, and determine by what election or selection Jesus was commissioned; but this I feel, that the commission, the appointment, did not alone constitute him the Messiah. He did not come as a king's messenger comes, as an envoy of an empire, solely at command. There was a deliberate and conscious acceptance of the office; and this, not in the mere boy-resolve of the Temple, or the secret struggle and purpose of the desert, not by baptism in the Jordan, but by going out into life

and carrying the spirit of self-sacrifice into every thing, — else “he had not been a man in God’s idea of manhood; for the idea of man which God had been for ages laboring to give, through a consecrated tribe and a consecrated nation, was the idea of a being whose life-law is *sacrifice*, every act and every thought being devoted to God.” His whole life was proof of his declaration, “I sanctify myself.” To have been merely *sent* made him a servant, at best a later Moses; but to *accept* the mission made him a son, — Jesus, the Christ.

Every man is “sent” into the world; but not till he consciously, deliberately, accepts his mission can he become lifted up into the great heirship with Christ: not till then is he a “son.” The act of sending, on the part of God, must be supplemented by the act of acceptance on the part of man. The acceptance must be without reserve. Not only must he take God’s gift of life, but he must give life to duty; not merely must he surrender himself to the Divine will, which is compulsion, but he must consecrate himself to the Divine love, which is choice. This is the complement to God’s act, without which it cannot be complete. It makes no odds what other consecrating there may have been, what setting apart of parent or of church, what dropping of water, what imposition of hands, what repeating of catechism, what signing of creed: it is all formal and valueless until the man have set himself apart in solemn, secret self-dedication. Balaam and Jonah and many another have been appointed to great duties, have been solemnly put aside for special work, yet have utterly failed to do it, because there was no inward consecrating, seconding and sealing that of God or man. The descending of the spirit upon Jesus, or any other appointing of God, had availed nothing to make him the world’s Redeemer, had he not consecrated himself. It was the spirit in him, meeting, co-

operating, blending with the spirit from on high, that gave him the power to become Son of God: it is that in us which shall lift us to be sons.

Self-consecration, the giving of one's self up to the service of God, is a grand, decisive, voluntary act of the soul, striking at the root of all worldliness and selfishness, and accepting without reserve whatever God may order to be done or to be borne. It is the putting side by side what the world has to offer and what God has to offer, the striking the balance between the two, and the unreserved acceptance of the offer of God. It is the conscious and free acceptance of the high destiny God lays before his children; the resolve to dedicate wholly body and mind and heart as a reasonable, holy, and acceptable sacrifice. It is the entrance into the spirit of Jesus, and the carrying of that spirit out into all the details of life, in devotedness to man and devotion to God. It is the full *at-one-ing* of the two wills, the reach of the spirit in man after the spirit of God, the approach of the finite toward the Infinite,—the soul's eternal task and grandest privilege. It is not an act of the will alone, one single, great resolve,—the vision of the Mount,—the luxurious, beatific attitude of faith and hope and longing into which secret prayer and thought sometimes throw us, when we taste angels' food, and feel as if the kingdoms of the world were already at our feet; not the transfiguration, but the after duty, the coming in cooler blood down amid the things of earth, the meeting and casting out of the kind that only goes out by the spirit's fast and prayer. The true law of every life, the only law of life, is consecration; and "consecration is not wrapping one's self in a holy web in the sanctuary, and then coming forth after prayer and meditation, and saying, 'There, I am consecrated.' Consecration is going out into the world where God Almighty is, and using every power

to his glory. It is simply dedicating one's life, its whole flow, to his service."

The failure of man so largely in the true life is because he will not comprehend what an *utter* thing consecration is, and how *utterly* impossible the kingdom is without it. The difference between a man who has consecrated himself, and the man who has made up his mind that on the whole it is better for him to lead a correct life, is as the difference between fiction and fact. Nothing can turn the man consecrate. Like Paul, he counts all loss gain; and the catalogue of pains and penalties is but his inspiration. What would deter others stimulates him: what would dismay, confirms. No high endeavor, no grand result, comes otherwise. It is the man rising to his native height, doing all things through the Christ strengthening him; the man no way lukewarm, but kindling with, possessed by, "the enthusiasm of humanity," and so treading down all intervening obstacles, till, more than conqueror, he wins "that crown with peerless glories bright."

I know just what every one says down in his heart as he reads this. I know how we shrink from such deliberate surrender of ourselves, our *all*, to God's law; and I know how utterly life fails of its grandeur, how it loses the promise in this, and its hope in the life to come, because this *one absolutely necessary thing* we will not do. We are willing enough to serve God, if we can only make our own reservations. Rebels so gladly take the oath of allegiance. But it is the reservation that kills the quality of the loyalty: it is the reservation that makes of us, not followers of God, as dear children, but timid and time-serving and unreliable slaves,—in the thing easy, the thing convenient, the thing in which we see immediate reward or penalty, obedient; but when the pressure comes, and the whole man is called on, when a cross is to be borne, hesitating,

half faithful, or recreant. There are times of tribulation in every human experience, often unrecognized by other men,—things in our inner secret lives, as well as of our outward and visible,—when nothing can stand but the soul which is *all* God's; there are times when men terribly fail, when the disaster of their moral overthrow is broad and deep. It is only the old story. The house is built upon the sand. The life is not riveted into the core of the rock. There has been some reserve in the consecration,—a secret flaw, which at the test-moment betrays itself, and wrecks the man.

We do not want to be at the mercy of flaws. In the metal thoroughly welded they need not be. Make self-consecration thorough, and the gates of hell cannot prevail.

How am I to make self-consecration thorough,—how get my grapple in the heart of the rock,—how secure myself against flaw?

1. By making your consecration *complete*; by reserving nothing to yourself; by giving all to God. The curse of the soul is its habit of *halfness*. Life everywhere bears melancholy witness to the fact. In the things of the higher life, it is specially disastrous. Whose conscience does not condemn him? Who does not shamefully halt at the very crisis-point,—retreat at the moment that he should charge? Who has not again and again turned abruptly from his prayers, his resolves, his hopes, his only relief a panic cry, “God have mercy!” as there starts in his soul the conviction that after all it is only half service that he offers; that there is behind another, blacker half, stubbornly refusing to be surrendered? What sighings, what upbraidings, what conscience-frights, at these too frequent revealings! and then what a lapse again into the old way, into the death-bondage! Man's soul must be in daily peril, unsafe in its safest hour, so long as he cannot yield this other half, so

long as he will not make consecration a thing in every way complete. Sin must be master so long as man shall be renegade. The whole man-power is not out, in use, the whole power to do, the whole power to resist, and so there is ever this wretched failure, nursing ever the deadly, growing skepticism as to man's ability to be what God demands and Christ enjoins. Man's infidelity neutralizes Christ's example, and thwarts the Divine purpose; and the second coming of the Saviour in the renewed life of his disciples is hardly more than a far-off dream of a few waiting Simeons and Annas.

2. And, next, consecration must not be mere resolve. The most obstinately resolved is not self-consecrated. In mere resolve, we have only the human elements. The Divine partner is omitted,—that Being whose silent, special partnership is the real capital in the enterprise. When the unjust steward says, "I am resolved what to do," there is no quickening sympathy in us. We are not roused. It is a man's word: there is no God in it. But when the Christ says, "I sanctify myself," or Paul declares, "This one thing I do," you find yourself unconsciously aglow, and a kindred spirit in you, and you know that they will do until the end; and you feel that your doing lies that way. The resolved man is the man alone: the consecrated man is the man with God.

3. Self-consecration is not a single act, or fact in the past,—a definite thing to be referred back to; it is not an act, an impulse, an emotion, a sentiment, but a principle brought and laid upon the altar of service, to be constantly re-placed, re-sanctified, as the show-bread of the table before the altar. It was this perpetual renewal of the early vow that made Jesus the all-conqueror; not in Nazareth, not in the Temple, not at the Jordan, not in the Wilderness only was his consecrating, but in every deed of love, in

every word of truth, in every mountain prayer, in every midnight vigil, in every buffet of man, and every travail of his soul. Renewedly dedicated was he, not by any new Divine outpouring, but by ever-new outgoing of his spirit toward the Infinite, and ever-helping love.

4. Nor is it merely the consecration of ourselves that is needed,—our hearts, our thoughts, our principles; but the consecration of what is ours, the results of gifts God has made us in the beginning, the using of his talents. The man of intellect should consecrate his brain to God, and, dying, be able to say that there is no line he could wish to blot, no sentiment he could desire to suppress; the man of ingenuity should consecrate his gift, and let the cunning of his hand labor nowhere that it will not bless man or help God. The artist, the discoverer, the man of science, and every greater or humbler man, is bound to use his ability as a Divine trust, and see that it glorify not himself, but God; and he who has money and makes money is bound, with no niggardly dole, to give it freely out to God's service,—not to hug it or to squander it, but to remember that it is the *only gift of God of which he cannot take something away*; that it is the gift of God by which he can do much good; and that it is the mean avarice and hoarding of it, the stingy, selfish neglect to use it for man and for God, which constitutes a crime Jesus more frequently and terribly rebuked, to which he awarded more fearful punishment, than all others. Take down your Bibles, and read the Gospels through with that one thought, and see how much and how perpetual is his demand of money, and what a doom he promises the man who will not be rich toward God; and then go into life, having not merely set apart, but *consecrated*, some new portion of your increase—God's money—to the good of some fellow-man, some needy cause, some social good, to some great eternal

principle of truth, justice, liberty, right. Make a habit of so consecrating the returns of every ability, that in the end yours may be the hopeful, cheerful answer, "Lo! there thou hast thine own with usury."

It is useless to talk, and deny the power of the human soul to do any thing God asks of it. It is no harsh, selfish task set us for his own glory; but to our fidelity it will approve itself as a staff of support and a reward of joy. It will ever bring comfort and power. I have somewhere met a thought like this, the truth of which all will recognize,—there is in us all, and native to us, an element of self-sacrifice. It pulses through the imagination of our youth; it is the spur of maturer love. Where we love we desire to give, not outward gifts merely, but *self*,—that which specially is ours, *ourselves*. There is none so selfish but in some sphere desires to give up self, and succeeds. The element out of which self-consecration grows is, then, not merely a thing possible,—an acquisition; but an endowment,—native. That consecration of self is possible in lower things, the long, patient devotedness in sickness proves, the grand heroism of the last past years attests. Is there not something deeper and better in us, something of more worth, something in which we may more desire to be spent, than love of friends, or loyalty to country? And is there not something of a grand help in the very thought and purpose of so serving God, which lifts half the difficulty, and should take away all the doubt? If it be a thing a man can do,—dare danger and death in the spirit of devotedness to country, can we not give life, the every energy we possess, the uttermost that we are, to Him, the all-loving and gracious? Indeed, there is no impossibility about it. The two things are similar in kind; they only differ in degree. Christ's life is only impossible where there is no Christ's spirit; and Christ's spirit is not the

gift to the great and wise, the few : it is not exceptional ; but God gives it without measure to the simple, who ask for it, who toil for it, who wait for it, who know it when it comes, and who accept and use it. He drops it into any heart which lies open to receive it, as he drops the dew into the lowliest flower whose upturned cup all day long has thirsted after, and patiently waited, the coming of the blessing.

There is a single way to do the will of God on earth, to render him the acceptable service. It is to consecrate, to religiously set apart and devote, ourselves to Him. And this consecration, as it was in Christ, is not one, but a series of acts, a constant renewal. The life of God in the soul is not a thing to be left to hazard, which may come in return to a little forethought and preparation. You cannot take it up under a spasm of emotion, and carry it out as a sentiment into life. Sentiment parches and shrivels in the first heat of the world, wilts and wastes before its sirocco breath. It must be a principle, a thing with a taproot running deep down into the interior consciousness, grappling with the foundations of life, and getting its success of that Holy Spirit whose presence and sustaining power is not absent from any, though it slumber in the many who will not rouse it into life.

To the work, then. "Rally the good in the depths of thyself." Bring the great offering,—the heart, the life. Lay it reverently, with a great purpose and a deep prayer, with unflinching faith and kindling hope, upon the altar of service. God will move before it and about it, and will accept it as he once accepted Abraham's sacrifice ; he will welcome it as he welcomed the Saviour's submission ; he will reward it with his best gift,—here peace, and hereafter bliss.

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THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

PREFATORY NOTE.

[The following was originally published in 1820, with the title, "Letter from a Congregationalist to a Friend on the Subject of joining the New Episcopal Church." It was shortly after the consecration of St. Paul's Church in Boston, and had reference to the proselyting attempts in connection with that Society.

Portions of the article which were local and temporary have been omitted in the present republication.]

I HAVE duly received your note of the 24th inst. You inform me therein, that you have been solicited on various occasions, and with great urgency, to take a pew in the new Episcopal Church, just consecrated, in Common Street; and you request my opinion as to what course you ought to pursue. I hope it is not altogether flattery, when you tell me you do this in a reliance on my liberality; and I am sure that I am not too confident in hoping that you will make candid but due allowance, for the prejudices in which you know me to have been brought up, and under the influence of which I must, of course, speak to you. I am not ashamed of these congregational prejudices; for, like some other prejudices, they seem to be

nearly allied to virtues. It was by the spirit of congregationalism, that the first impulse was given, that ended in the settlement of our native land. It was that Church whose forms you are now solicited to adopt, which tyrannically ejected our ancestors from their pulpits and churches in England; and when I think of the two thousand faithful ministers of Christ, who were driven out from their charges in one day by the haughty English prelacy, I feel as if it were almost a part of national and patriotic duty not to look upon the question between the religious institutions of our ancestors, and those of the hierarchy which oppressed, ejected, and exiled them, as one of pure indifference.

You repeat to me in a hasty manner the arguments which you say have been addressed to you to induce you to leave the church in which you were baptized, of which you are a professing member, and where you have dedicated your children to the Christian faith. These arguments are some of them purely *ad captandum*, thrown in, I suppose, as slight make-weights to turn an almost wavering scale. I shall not, therefore, think it necessary to say any thing upon the comparative choice of a place for Christian worship, between a stone building in Grecian taste and a brick building in no taste at all. On the contrary, I rejoice as much as any one in the zeal displayed in the erection, at great expense, of an edifice in considerably better taste than any that our town can boast. It diminishes but little my satisfaction, that it is Grecian without and Roman within; and that, in constructing the portico of six columns instead of four, the architect has departed, not only from the model of the edifice which he professed to take for his guide, the little temple on the Ilissus, but has violated, I am told, the express canon of classic antiquity, which prescribes four columns to a por-

tico. I throw this out, not from any wish to do injustice to the style in which the new church is executed, which is certainly beautiful, but merely as a sort of offset to the appeal which has been made to our fashionable community, whom I have known in other instances besides yours to have been urged to join the Episcopal Church, upon the score of its being “the only one in town in which *a man of taste* could worship.”

For the same reason, I shall say but little of another appeal which you tell me has been pressed on you; viz., that the father of your wife was an Episcopalian. I respect no prejudices more than filial ones, and should be grieved to say any thing which might seem disrespectful to the honored memory of Mrs. ——’s late father. But I suppose I may, without offence, call on you to remember, that, if your wife’s father was an Episcopalian, your own father was not. Since you cannot well worship in two places, it would perhaps be as decent, and as conformable to domestic order, that your wife should continue to go with you to the church where she has already held up her children to be baptized, as that you should leave that church, for the sake of following her to a different form of worship, in which her father was educated. Were this a mere matter of conjugal courtesy, I would not be stiff about it. If you are willing to be reckoned with those who consider going to church as going to a fashionable exchange, or to a place of entertainment for a weary leisure day, why then it little matters where you go, or where you do not go; and, instead of submitting to the fatigue and wearisomeness of sitting an hour and a half or two hours in any church, you might attain the same end, and approve your courtesy as effectually to your wife, by taking her down to Nahant, or up to Fresh Pond. The subject, I confess, is too serious for this reply: it is the

arguments made use of which I ridicule. Let me add, moreover, that, if your wife's father was an Episcopalian, her grandfather was a Congregationalist, a stanch pillar of the Church of our forefathers, whose sacred rest it would go near to disturb, to hear that his descendants in the second generation were going over to the English Church.

Let me not be thought to speak slightly of a wife's scruples. Wherever the case occurs, that a wife conscientiously and unaffectedly believes and approves the doctrines or worship of the Episcopal or any other church, while her husband as conscientiously adheres to those of another, if she have not freedom of spirit to obey the Scripture command, to submit *herself to her husband as to the Lord*, then let them worship, each in their own church and their own way; but do not, on any account or from any consideration, be led to think that so solemn a thing as religious worship is to be made a subject of good-natured compliance and courtesy.

And here, before I proceed to communicate to you those important grounds upon which I think your opinion ought to be made up, I will observe, that there seems to me a gross impropriety in the common language made use of on these occasions. To leave a Congregational and go to an Episcopal church is called changing your *place* of worship; as if it were the *place* only which is changed, while the *worship* remains the same. This would be a language proper to be used of any one who should emigrate from the Park-street or the Essex-street Church to that in Common Street, as the articles of the Episcopal Church are known to be so Calvinistic (though *honestly* constructed with a design of being comprehensive enough to bring both orthodox and heretic within the fold) as to have induced some serious persons of Orthodox faith to join the Episcopal churches. But to those who have not

previously been imbued with Orthodox doctrines, it is not changing the *place* of worship to desert our Congregational churches for the Episcopal ones, it is changing the worship itself. It is going to a place where there is a different *object* of worship. It is leaving a church where God the Father is worshipped, to go to one where God the Son and God the Holy Ghost are worshipped with him. It is leaving a church where worship is paid to the one living and true God, as one person, to attend a church where it is taught that this one God is to be worshipped in three persons; and it is, finally, quitting a church where the form of the service puts it in the power of minister and people *to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, and avail themselves of the immense stores of sacred literature which have been opened in the last generation for the better understanding of the Scriptures, to go to a church built on the popish principle of infallibility, and tied down to a form of worship which has the certain effect of binding the consciences of one age in the chains of another. It is not my intention to enter into doctrinal discussions at this time. I shall not say a word against the doctrine of the Trinity, or any other doctrine contained in the articles of the Episcopal Church, any further than to allude to their existence in those articles. On the contrary, I have candor enough to rejoice, that, in our large and increasing town, there is a new church erected, where those who believe in its doctrines can conscientiously, with edification, and conveniently, assemble and worship. So far from moving any discussion against the doctrines of the Church, Unitarian though I be, I would say that in this very point is to be found the solution of the question you propose to me. If you believe the doctrines and approve the ritual of the Church, in God's name join yourself to it. You ought to

go there. You will be edified there. I am not a believer in the Trinity, but many men, better, I hope, than I, are believers of it; let them go to a church where they will be taught to say, "O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three persons and one God, have mercy upon us miserable sinners." It is for persons who believe and feel this to go to a church where it is a part of the prescribed service; nor can I sufficiently express my surprise to you, that it ever could have become a question, whether anybody who did *not* believe it could or ought to join the Episcopal Church. I did not know that the most solemn act in which man can engage—the worship of God—was the subject for accommodation and compliance. I did not know, that, while kneeling down at the altar, with the most awful addresses which language can form on your lips, it was permitted to indulge in reservations which, even between man and man in the intercourse of life, would not be thought creditable. Many Orthodox I knew there must ever be, who could not reconcile to their notions of simple and scriptural worship the repetitions and ceremonies of the Episcopal ritual; but while I knew that all Trinitarians could *not* attend an Episcopal church, it was new to me that any Unitarians could. I was not prepared to see fashion, example, persuasion, and courtesy go to such length, and carry Christians to an altar where they cannot take their hearts and their consciences with them.

I proceed now to consider particularly some of the arguments by which you may be induced to join the Church.

1st. That you are fond of *a form of prayer*. I am fond of it also; but I do not join the Episcopal Church, because I like a *substance* of prayer better. I am amazed to hear intelligent Christians express so little regard for the faith they profess, as, because they prefer a *form* of

prayer, to attend a worship where they do not acknowledge the *object prayed to*. Such persons do well to say that they like “a form of prayer.” A form indeed they do like, and a form only, else they would not, as Unitarians, like a Trinitarian form: they would not think they could worship God acceptably, where their consciences cried out against the form in which their prayers are clothed.

Though I would find no fault with any person who believed the doctrines of the Episcopal Church for being attached to the form in which the worship is conducted, according to the Book of Common-Prayer, yet there are, notwithstanding, many and great objections to that ritual, independent of its doctrines, which have deterred and always will deter even Trinitarians who have a taste for a scriptural simplicity in divine service. These objections are not modern objections, they are not Unitarian objections, they are not objections now devised in the spirit of local opposition. I could give them to you in the words of Calamy and Baxter, and the other Presbyterian commissioners named by the king in 1661, with some of the highest dignitaries of the Church of England, for the revision of the Book of Common-Prayer. The limits of this letter will not allow me to give these objections; but I will send you the work, that you may read it at large.

It is a well-known saying of Lord Chatham, that the Church of England hath “a Popish liturgy, a Calvinistic creed, and an Arminian clergy.” A Popish liturgy and Calvinistic articles she has in this country, as well as in England: how far St. Paul’s Church will or will not justify the addition of an “Arminian clergy,” I am not informed.

I said above, that I, too, was fond of a form of prayer. But, in order to prevent it from overlaying and stifling the substance, there should be an edifying choice and variety;

and, instead of a poor and monotonous ceremonial to be run through "Wednesdays, Fridays, and Sundays" throughout the year, and every year, there should be such a succession of services as would prevent a frequent recurrence of any one, and which would advantageously take the place of the garbled extracts from the Gospels and Epistles, of the short and unmeaning collects, and, above all, the antiquated version of the Psalms, which now fill up the Book of Common-Prayer. This last portion of the Prayer-book is particularly obnoxious; and a volume might be written to point out the gross absurdities of putting, Sunday after Sunday, into the mouths of the worshippers, men, women, and children, petitions which were applicable only to the individual circumstances of David or Solomon. As one example is better than a thousand assertions, I shall here trouble you with one or two taken on opening the Church Psalter at hazard. Whenever Sunday falls on the 22d of the month, all the congregation, priest and people, warden and clerk, man, woman, and child, are obliged, under the name of evening prayer, to repeat such an injudicious and unedifying selection from the Psalms as this: "*Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine, Ephraim also is the strength of my head, Juda is my law-giver, Moab is my washpot, over Edom will I cast out my shoe.*" Not content with this specimen of *evening prayer*, and having called on the worshippers to say that Moab is his washpot, and over Edom he will cast out his shoe, he is obliged, in the same evening prayer, to remember his enemies in the following Christian style:—

"Let his days be few, and let another take his office.

"Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow.

"Let his children be vagabonds, and beg their bread; let them seek it also out of desolate places.

"Let the extortioner consume all that he hath, and let the stranger spoil his labor.

"Let there be no man to pity him, nor to have compassion on his fatherless children."

This is evening prayer for Christians; and what originally was written by David in the bitterness of personal provocation, and under the influence of those imperfect views of religious duty which the preparatory dispensation inspired, is kept up as a part of Christian service to be repeated for ever by persons who ought to be taught by their Master to *bless those who curse them*.

Finally, were it nothing but an attachment to a form of prayer, which carries many, against the dictates of their consciences, and their persuasion of religious truth, to the Episcopal Church, one would think that they would in preference have joined themselves to King's Chapel. They would there have enjoyed the advantage of the form,—of the Episcopal form as purged of its doctrinal peculiarities by the successive labors of the distinguished Dr. Samuel Clarke, and the Rev. Drs. Lindsey and Disney. It is true, this form of worship is intended to meet the consciences of those who wish for a purely Unitarian worship; but there is nothing in it exclusively Unitarian, and nothing offensive to an Arian, or even to a Trinitarian, except by omission. It answers in this to what was recommended by the royal Presbyterian commissioners in 1661, who, Orthodox as they were, still had the liberality to make use of the following language: "In pursuance of His Majesty's most gracious commission, for the satisfaction of tender consciences, and the procuring of peace and unity among ourselves, we judge mete to propose,—

"First, that all the prayers and other materials of the liturgy may consist of nothing *doubtful or questioned* among pious, learned, and orthodox persons, inasmuch as the professed end of composing them is for the declaring of the unity and consent of all who join in the public worship."

Considering this to have been written by such men as Baxter and Calamy, in 1661, methinks it might give a lesson to us in 1820. But here is the very mischief of written and prescribed forms, that they are a conspiracy against the progress of light and knowledge; and, seizing upon the human intellect and the power of understanding divine truth, at some one stage of its progress, commonly at a low and imperfect stage, they condemn it to rest there, and say to it, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further."

I shall allude to but one more objection to a form of prayer, which is this, that, besides unsuiting the clergy for the performance of an extemporaneous religious service whenever occasion requires it, it leads to indifference in all the religious exercises, to the degree that Episcopalian preaching, both in England and America, is notoriously poor. The reason is obvious. One great part of the service is written, and the mind is never wrought up to the duty of devotional preparation. Again, the space which the form of prayer occupies in the services of the sanctuary throws the sermon into the shade; and it is common enough to hear Episcopilians so blinded to the defects of their form of worship, as even to mention it as an advantage, that *the preaching* is of little consequence.

The preaching of God's word of little consequence! The only engine by which the reformation in religion was brought about, the only means of keeping up any tolerable measure of religious light among the people! It was by excluding preaching almost wholly from the churches that the Papists succeeded in enslaving the world; and, just in proportion as this main part of religious duty is neglected and undervalued, will religion sink into superstition.

I need not ask not to be mistaken here. No man can be farther than I from wishing to have the services of the

sanctuary grow into a mere literary exercise, an exhibition of preaching, a show of fine paragraphs. This is odious, heathenish, wicked; and it is said, unjustly I think, to be the sin of our Congregational churches at the present day. I have thought that this was injuriously charged on our churches, and that those who wished to find or make an apology for cold, sleepy preaching, on the part of themselves or their ministers thought proper to stigmatize a warmer and more impassioned manner as artificial. At any rate, with all the abhorrence I feel of art, I shall find but little fault with those arts in a Christian preacher which enchain the attention and command the sympathy of his audience. But let not our Episcopalian brethren, while they boast of their exemption, as we think they safely may, from this sort of preaching, do not let them forget, that the fastidiousness of literary taste still creeps in, and craves indulgence among them. A good, clear voice and a distinct enunciation are a fortune in the Episcopal Church. A man can *read himself* into the best parishes of their communion; and, much as I like good reading, I must think, that, either in point of taste or edification, fine reading is a little lower, to say the least, in the scale, than fine preaching.

It is more than time to state to you my impressions of the value of another argument, which you say has been urged on you to induce you to join the new church; viz., that, by so doing, you escape from religious controversy which, whether you attend the Orthodox or the Liberal churches in Boston, is sure to be your portion. I have heard this argument mentioned by others as well as yourself; and I shall therefore give it a fair, though brief, consideration.

In the first place, it seems to me to assume a fact of which I was not aware, and which I still doubt to exist in a very oppressive degree.

But, independent of all this, the idea of escaping from religious controversy by attending a Trinitarian church is much like the argument used on some occasion in favor of the slave-trade, and to which Bishop Warburton, who alludes to the argument, gives an admirable reply, that serves also with perfect pertinency in the present case. "What," says the bishop (I quote from memory), "you tell us that the West-India slavery is better than the African barbarism, where the savage princes are at liberty to hunt the poor negroes, whom they take and sell. A great advantage, truly, to exchange the liberty of being hunted for the liberty of being caught." And a great escape, indeed, for a quiet conscience, to leave a church where certain difficult doctrines are controverted, to go to one where these same doctrines must perforce be avowed! A great escape, indeed, for one who will not have his religious affections disturbed by doubtful disputations on the Trinity, to go to a church where he must do, what I believe is never done even in our most Orthodox Congregational churches, pray to the Trinity by name! And this is the escape from controversy which Episcopalianism offers to the Unitarian who does not like to have doctrinal points agitated! and which seems to me literally, in the words of Bishop Warburton, exchanging the liberty of being hunted for the liberty of being caught.

So far from the Episcopal Church affording any relief to quiet consciences, who wish to leave out of sight the doctrinal questions, it is an undoubted truth, that, in no churches in our country are doctrines so obtruded into the worship. I have attended Orthodox Presbyterian worship as often as usually falls to the lot of a Unitarian, and I do not remember ever to have heard a prayer addressed explicitly to the Trinity; and it is only of late years, that the triune ascription, as it is called, has become general.

Nothing is so rare, even in the services of the most zealous Trinitarians, as to hear prayers separately addressed to God the Son, nor can I recollect ever to have heard a prayer addressed to God the Holy Ghost, all of which are to be found in the Episcopal ritual. Our Orthodox Congregational brethren, faithful to their assertion, that, though they believe in three persons, they worship but one God, dwell almost entirely on the unity, to the exclusion of the plurality; and in so doing practise a Christian and laudable tenderness for the understandings of their hearers, confessedly inadequate to grasp this mystery. I have been told by a clerical friend, that this is still more strikingly the case in Scotland, the praise of whose orthodoxy is in all the churches. He tells me that in a considerable town in Scotland, and in a free attendance on all sorts of worship, he never heard any thing from an Orthodox minister there from which the doctrine of the Trinity could be deduced by any thing but implication. It was not for want of believing it; there was not, perhaps, one of them who would not, if occasion called, have lifted up his voice in its defence; but they feel, what every man must feel, that, if it be true, it is too mysterious and unintelligible to be an eligible subject of repetition in a Christian assembly: and I confess it disgusts me to hear a doctrine from which one part of the Christian community revolts as unscriptural, and the great majority almost wholly abstains as unedifying, obtruded some number of times into every morning and evening service of the Episcopal Church.

You will by this time, my dear friend, feel possessed of my opinions on the subject of joining the new church. Briefly to recapitulate them, they are these:—

1. That no person can, with propriety, worship in an Episcopal church, who does not believe in the doctrines contained in its articles, and involved in its ritual.

2. That, even to those who have no doctrinal objections, the ritual has great imperfections.

3. That the expected refuge from controversy desired by tender consciences is in nowise to be found in the Episcopal Church.

Should you ask my permission to make this letter public for the sake of assisting others to whom the same application may be made as to yourself, I shall not object. There may be a little odium attached to this kind of interference, but I trust it will not be forgotten that all rights are not on one side. Some zeal and activity have been displayed in building up the new church; and, if I have not been misinformed, the new flock is, in some measure, expected to be gathered by lambs called over from other folds. I presume not to call in question, nor even curiously to sift, the means which have been employed on this occasion; but I hope, that, while the gentlemen concerned in the new church maintain their right to enlist recruits wherever they can get them, they will not wholly forget that others have a corresponding right.

FOURTH SERIES.]

[No. 10

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BY

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

BOSTON.

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"What think ye?" — MARK xiv. 64.

I WISH here, in addressing my fellow-believers, to set forth, as briefly as possible, the distinctive features of our faith, that we may have wherewith to answer those who approach us, saying, "What think ye?"

1. *What think ye of God in his personality?*

Our very name is an answer. Our theology is *Unitarian*, or monotheistic. We believe that there is one God, and one alone. Is it not strange, that, in this day of Christian enlightenment, we should have to fight over again the battle of monotheism,—the battle begun by Abraham and the Patriarchs against the heathen, continued by Moses and the Jews against the barbarians, finished by Christ and his apostles against the rest of the world, but renewed again by Unitarians against Trinitarians?

History has no record of any age that has not had its monotheism,—God never leaving himself without a witness; and, in every age, the highest science, the highest

literature, and the highest civilization, have been monotheistic. We therefore have the proud position which Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, Christ, and Paul each held in his own day,—the position of defenders of God's unity. With them we stand or fall. The Trinity is a human invention, since their day. It has no Scripture language, even in which to express itself. While the Church prays, in words of its own invention, “O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three persons and one God!” we pray, in the words of Christ, “Our Father who art in heaven.” There is need of a new dispensation, with a voice more persuasive than that of Christ, saying again, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart.” For the Catholic Church has put Mary before God, and all but ourselves in the Protestant Church have put Christ before God. Oh let us proclaim our faith with more zeal! and when we are asked, What think ye of God? answer, Think? I do not think: I *know* that he is one. This is no half-belief. It is one of those truths that proves itself by its harmony with instinct, intuition, science,—in fact, with every other manifestation of God. The Unitarian view finds its noblest expression in the ascription of Paul, “Now unto the King eternal, immortal, and invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.”

2. *What think ye of God in his nature?*

We answer, that he is the perfection of all our highest conceptions of justice, goodness, mercy, and love. This, again, distinguishes us from all other sects.* For they

* In speaking of the distinguishing doctrines held by Unitarians, I am aware that, in general, the same doctrines are held by Universalists; and they are not included in the phrase, “other sects.”

regard him as alone the perfection of sovereignty, and make Christ the perfection of love, and ascribe all other perfections to the Holy Spirit; thus parcelling out the attributes of Divinity, as if they were too much to be emanations from one God alone. Here, again, we stand with Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, Jesus, and Paul, ascribing all perfections to God alone, and saying, with Christ, "There is none good but one; that is, God."

3. What think ye of God in his manifestations?

We answer, that he is immanent in all his works, the fountain of all life, the foundation of all law. All life is but a manifestation of his activity; all law is but the mode of his activity; all truth is but the harmony of his activity. When he shows himself outwardly and tangibly, we call it matter, body, substance; when he shows himself inwardly and invisibly, we call it mind, soul, spirit. He is as much in one as in the other. Both nature and man are but the thoughts of God.

This view, again, distinguishes us from all other sects; for they put God apart from his creation, governing it by laws established in some past time, and, when he saw that things were about to go to rack and ruin, "incarnating his eternal word in Jesus Christ," — "God of God, very God of very God," — and now guiding all things by the Holy Spirit, "proceeding from the Father and the Son." We have no such complicate and mysterious theology to offer to the inquirer after God. We believe that God made no mistake when he created man, and that he has always been drawing him to himself: first and always by the still, small voice of conscience, then by wise lawgivers, then by inspired psalmists and prophets, then by his well-beloved Son, and now by his Holy Spirit, the Comforter, which

shall abide with us for ever. The Old Testament is the historical record of this divine guidance of the Hebrew nation, and the New Testament is the record of this divine guidance of all nations. All history is but the record of these divine manifestations. This is the noblest feature of Unitarianism,— its recognition of God in all history, or of the divine element in every man. We do not believe that God reveals himself only to here and there some favored one ; but that he gives of his spirit to all, raising one above another only as he receives more talents to be spent in God's service. It is this belief that makes us deniers of the doctrine of total depravity. We believe that in every soul, however low, is some spark of heavenly flame. We believe that only as we all are created in the image of God, can we ever hope to attain to any likeness to him in our character and life. The orthodox view is, that Adam alone was created in the image of God, and that he only retained it till he was tempted ; and that, "in his fall, we sinned all," and lost that image, and now—created, as they say we are, totally depraved — can only recover it through the infinite atonement of Jesus Christ. But *we* believe that God hath provided better things for us than this ingenious device of men ; that "he hath made of one blood all nations, and giveth to all life and breath and all things ; and that in him we live and move and have our being." We believe that we need no atonement, except at-one-ment in spirit, to bring us to God. We believe that we need no official intercessor with the Father ; for the Father himself loveth us, and is more willing to give than we are to ask. This was the whole aim of Christ's mission,— to bring us near to God, and make us feel his spirit in our hearts. This is the hope of the world,— that it shall recognize this divine element in every man ; for

then every man will feel a new dignity in the possession of this heavenly treasure, and a new responsibility to keep it bright and pure, away from the corroding rust of folly and of sin. But the Church has been working counter to the spirit of Christ; and whereas he tried to make us feel that we were children of God, she has used her best efforts to make us feel that we were children of Satan, and outcasts from the kingdom of heaven. Unitarianism is a protest, in the name of Christ, against this degrading of humanity in order to elevate it. We believe that humility is a sure stepping-stone to exaltation, but that depravity is a downward step to degradation. We believe in exalting human nature, not in debasing it. We believe in cherishing the spark of divinity in our souls, not in smothering it under the ashes of a forced humiliation. So much in answer to the question, What think ye of God in his manifestations? We believe that he is the life of nature, and the source of the life of man; never far away from any one of us, and always giving of his spirit directly to those who open their hearts to receive it.

4. What think ye of Christ?

We think he is every thing which he claims to be. We think that he was commissioned by God to bring to man a new revelation of himself, and endowed by God with every power that was necessary to fix this revelation in the hearts of men. We think that his nature was like our own; that he was tempted in all points like as we are; that he struggled through the wilderness of doubt as we must struggle; that he drank of the cup of bitterness as we must drink, and was baptized with the baptism of sorrow as we must be baptized; that he prayed for strength

as we must pray, and overcame the world as we must overcome ; that, at last, he gained the victory over death, and thanks be to God that He giveth us also the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. This doctrine again, strange to say, separates us from most Christians ; for all others have thrust upon Christ a divinity that he did not claim, and exalted him upon a throne that he steadfastly refused. Unitarianism denies to Christ this official divinity that the Church has invented, and ascribes to him that spiritual divinity which he continually asserted of himself. "The Son can do nothing of himself; but whatsoever things the Father doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." We believe that Christ's life was the clearest reflection of the divine that has ever been lived on the earth. We know that we are all created in the image of God ; but we believe, with the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, that Christ was "the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person." So we find in Christ not a God condescending to humanity, but humanity rising up to God ; not a God for us to worship, but an example for us to follow. If Christ should come among us to-day, the Church would again offer him — as Satan did in the wilderness — the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them ; but it would hear again, in tones of sterner rebuke, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." I thank God that we, as Unitarians, would have nothing to offer him but a throne in our inmost hearts. There we will enshrine him ; and while he prays, "I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one," we shall know that we have given him the only throne that he ever sought, and paid him the only honor that he ever claimed.

5. What think ye of the Holy Spirit?

We believe that it is the creative energy and activity of God; not a personality, but a personification. From the necessities of language, when we speak of God working in the world, we say he works by his Holy Spirit; when we speak of his helping man, we say that he gives his Holy Spirit; when we speak of man refusing his help, we say he quenches God's Holy Spirit: and so the Bible always speaks, not of personality, but of the personification of God's creative and revealing agency in the world. The Holy Spirit is God manifesting himself. We believe that his Holy Spirit never leaves the world, that it will abide with us for ever; that God is always ready to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask it; and that it is another name for the Spirit of Truth, which dwells in the hearts of all who try to guide their actions by the eternal principles of right. Herein we do not differ so much from other Churches. For although they assert in their creeds, that the Holy Spirit is a distinct person in the Godhead, they practically ignore its personality, and speak of it, as we do, as an influence proceeding from God. Still, we should not the less congratulate ourselves, that our belief is consistent with our practice; and that, when we address the throne of grace, we do not have to stop and think whether we will pray to God or Christ or the Holy Spirit. We bow the knee to God alone.

6. What think ye of man in his nature?

We believe that he was created in the image of God that, so far as he has spiritual powers and aspirations, so far is he a partaker of the Divine nature. We believe that the soul of the child is as pure as the source from which

it came in the bosom of the Father in heaven. We are not blind to the burden of hereditary evil that sometimes seems to crush this pure soul. That is the result of physical laws, which execute themselves with unerring precision. The soul must of necessity encounter them in its earthly life; and it is often met, at the outset of its pilgrimage, with such a force of hereditary predispositions to evil, that it never in this life outgrows them. But these do not constitute guilt, until the soul has of its own will yielded to them. Herein we differ widely from other sects. For they assert, that the soul is in its essence sinful, and burdened with the guilt of Adam, and can be saved only by an acceptance of the infinite atonement of Jesus Christ. The Confession of the New-England Congregational Churches, like that of the Westminster Divines, describes man as "dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body, and therefore bound over to the wrath of God." We set against this horrid invention of the Church theologians, the simple declaration of Christ, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," and that most solemn warning, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."

7. *What think ye of man in his destiny?*

We believe that he is endowed with powers capable of infinite development; that he is allowed free course to work out his own salvation, yet is so hedged in by God's law, and encompassed by God's love, that he cannot always resist the pleadings of God's Spirit, but will sometime take and keep the path of eternal blessedness and peace. Life is a divine flame; and though at times it seems to be smothered by sin and extinguished in death, yet we

believe it is never utterly quenched ; but that, through God's mercy, it will shine on and on unto the perfect day.

Thus have I tried to give, as simply and concisely as possible, the distinguishing doctrines of religion as held by the majority of Unitarians. I have given no half-beliefs. I believe them with my whole soul, because they are in harmony with nature, with Scripture, with science, and with the highest instincts in man. If I should put them in the form of a creed, to be repeated by the devout believer, it would be like this :—

I believe in God as the Creator of the world, the Former of our bodies, and the Father of our spirits ; and I desire, in sincerity and in truth, to worship him alone. I believe in Jesus as the well-beloved Son of God, sent to be the way, the truth, and the life ; and I will try to walk in his way, to learn his truth, and to live his life. I believe in the Holy Ghost as the creative energy of God in the world, and the guiding, sustaining, and revealing influence of God in the soul ; and I will strive always to keep my soul open to this influence. I believe in man,—in his birthright as a child of God, in his duty to obey God, and his destiny to become like God. I believe in prayer,—that it is the highest privilege and the deepest help to the soul. I believe in life,—that it is the test of opinion, the groundwork of faith, and the condition of salvation. I believe in the Cross,—that it lies in the path of my daily duty ; and I would take it up trustingly, and bear it on joyfully. I believe in the Crown,—that it lies in the path of my heavenly destiny ; and to snatch its peerless glories I will run and not be weary, I will strive and not faint.

This I would call a living creed. In such beliefs are gathered the faith and trust of all true disciples ; in such doctrines are bound up the hope of the world. They are

12 DISTINCTIVE DOCTRINES OF UNITARIANISM.

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THE

L I F E T O C O M E.

BY REV. A. P. PUTNAM.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

OUR FAITH.

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The Brotherhood of Man.
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onward and upward forever.*

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(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*)

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(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

“These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

“The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test ; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims.”

THE

LIFE TO COME.

BY REV. A. P. PUTNAM.

"Having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." — 1 TIM. iv. 8.

THE life that is to come! What grander and more solemn theme can engage the human mind than this? What subject has for us so profound and thrilling an interest? Beyond the veil that is suspended just before us, and that limits the mortal view, stretches out the vast, spiritual, eternal world. Thither the countless myriads who have lived and died on the earth have gone. Many who were dearer to us than our very life have crossed the boundary-line, and entered the mysterious domain. And we ourselves, gifted with immortality as they, are also moving constantly and irresistibly on to the same great destination, and shall soon be there. That unseen, stupendous realm, where are gathered so many of the heart's best treasures, whither have gone forth the multitudinous hopes and fears, the deepest dreads and longings, of all who have peopled the earth; and whence, of the innumerable millions who have passed into the solemn silence, not one has returned to tell us of what he has there seen and heard and felt,—that invisible and boundless realm, how, in our very

souls, we do yearn to know its mysteries and behold its wonders ! "What shall we be and where, when the brief, vanishing life that now is shall be ended?" is the deep, affecting inquiry which all of us not seldom address to ourselves, even amidst the crowding cares and vanities of our daily experience. There is no interrogatory that is so important, so momentous to us, in its meaning and solution, as this,—none which it is so profitable and well to consider, and also, so far as we can or may, to answer.

Yet how little it is that we can really know with certainty about the future world ! Successive generations, the purest and most gifted of the race, have sought to peer into the great unknown, and tell its secrets ; but in vain. How crude, absurd, ridiculous, seem to us now many of the theories of the life to come which they have formed, and which, it may be, have held no very limited sway over the minds of men ! Even the last desperate attempt of the popular mind to penetrate the awful veil, and make familiar to us the things that are hidden beyond it, has ended in failure. Modern Spiritualism has revealed to us no new truth. It has given us nothing which we did not know before. Our refuge, after all, is mainly in the Scriptures : there lies the world's great comfort still. And yet, even there, while there is so much to animate and satisfy the soul, how many an earnest inquiry and searching gaze fail of their answering object ! For some wise and good reason, God has purposely left us to know only in part, and to walk by faith. By the study of the word of God, by the exercise of the reason, and by the help of the hints and analogies of nature and of life, it is given us to behold enough to encourage us to continue steadfastly and joyfully that walk by faith, until at last we shall walk by sight, and know even as also we are known.

Still it may truly be said, that, as time has rolled on, no

little progress has been made in just and rational conceptions of life and destiny. It seems to us, in such an age as this, strange and almost incredible, that such horrible views of this subject should ever have long and extensively prevailed in the world, as have really constituted an essential part of the religious faith of the ages, and exerted their baleful influence upon unnumbered multitudes of souls. Heaven has been believed to be a vast, separate, localized region,—an immense and glorious city, perhaps,—situated far up, as it were, at the zenith of the universe, and enriched with walls of jasper, gates of pearl, and streets of gold; and hell has been conceived of as a deep and awful lake of burning fire and brimstone, at the nadir of the universe or in the centre of the earth, where all who die in a state of impenitence and sin are tormented, with inconceivable agonies, for ever and ever. The Christian world have generally believed in the resurrection of the fleshly body at what they have called the last great day, when they have supposed that Christ would visibly come in his glory, attended by angels, and would summon before his judgment-seat the awakened world of immortals, to sentence to heaven the righteous, and the wicked to hell. They have thought of the eternal state of both classes of men, as thus unalterably fixed at death,—the one to be, then and for ever, entirely and perfectly happy; the other to be, then and for ever, entirely and perfectly miserable. They have recognized no destined life of aspiration and progress for the former; no possible chance of repentance and recovery for the latter. The present alone, they have thought, is the season of probation and opportunity. Beyond the veil, God's moral government changes, and God is changed himself. His ear is everlastinglly closed to the cry of his sorrowing, suffering children, as it comes borne up to him on the hot, ascending flame and breath of

the pit ; while it is open only to the resounding praises, the rapturous exultations, of the redeemed around his throne. Here, in the life that now is, God is love ; there, in the life that is to come, he is a consuming fire.

All such views of the future world and the divine administration of affairs, as it stands related to it, seem to us gross, irrational, and false ; alike abhorrent to the best reason and higher instincts of the soul, and derogatory to the character and revealed truth of God.

Heaven and hell are not distant, separate, localized regions, somewhere in the mighty universe of God, but are states or conditions of the soul.

Heaven,— it is the kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. It is a kingdom that is not outward, but spiritual. “The kingdom of God is within you.” When one, through faith in Christ’s truth, through obedience to his divine precepts, and through a faithful imitation of his example and life, enters into a conscious state of purity, rectitude, and blessedness ; when thus he comes to feel that he is in harmony with God as well as with himself and that he has a sure inward rest which the world cannot give or take away,— he enters into heaven. Heaven, therefore, is here in the life that now is, as well as in that which is to come. The Christian on earth has already begun to taste its joys and satisfactions. As, in all the interminable future that lies before him, he makes progress in the divine way, he will come to know more and more largely the measure of its power and happiness. Yet it is true that here and now he is in heaven ; and, as long as he lives the life of faith and holiness, he cannot lose the glorious boon that has been given him. Go where he may, whatever the sorrows and sufferings he may be called upon to endure,— be it earthly loss or domestic bereavement, the prisoner’s dungeon or the martyr’s flame,— he is still

in heaven ; since God is approvingly with him, and Christ's benediction is upon him, and conscience whispers its words of peace and promise : as when Paul and Silas, incarcerated within gloomy walls in Philippi, prayed and sang praises at midnight to God.

Nor is hell the vast, yawning, visible gulf of despair and woe which the Christian world has so widely believed it to be. It is not an outward region of darkness, not a bottomless pit, not a place of torment into which embodied or disembodied souls are to be thrust, and punished for ever. Hell, like heaven, is a state or condition of the soul ; and it is a state or condition that is experienced here, just as surely as it may be experienced hereafter. Hell is internal discord and unrest. It is sin in the soul, quenching its holy light, filling it with impurity and disease, weakening its celestial power, demoralizing its glorious functions, torturing it with the stings of remorse, and leaving it without God or without hope in the world. Think of the multitudes who throng the streets, or fill the haunts of vice and shame in our cities, and who are given over to a life of vanity and crime ; who are the victims of every inordinate lust and affection ; who are brutalized by the unrestrained indulgence of every bad thought of the mind and passion of the heart ; whose countenances are lurid and scarred with the baleful fires of cruelty, hate, jealousy, and revenge ; whose homes are the perpetual scenes of violence, wrong, and depravity, where only are heard the voices of jest, anger, and profanity, and all knowledge and love and pursuit of heavenly things are utter strangers for ever,—and say if, in all this ignorance, filth, blasphemy, inhumanity, and woe, there is not a present and actual hell on earth, which is most fitly described in the vivid and terrible imagery by which the Bible portrays the doom of the wicked. Hell in the future is but the continuance of some

such life in the soul as this; only that the longer sin is cherished as the chosen part of the moral nature, the offending sufferer entails upon himself an ever-increasing amount of wretchedness, and prosecutes, with fearfully augmenting speed and success, the work of his undoing. Sin, now and ever, is its own awful punishment; and there, in the soul that sinneth, and so long as it sinneth, are the undying worm and the unquenchable fire. Hell is absence from God. It is the hiding of His countenance. There is no heaven where His smile is not, but only orphanage and anguish. Sin where or when we may, we so far withdraw ourselves from His blessed companionship, and avert from us His benignant look, and betake ourselves into the outer darkness, where, it is not too much to say, there are weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

As heaven and hell are not localized spheres in the infinite universe of space, but are only certain spiritual conditions or states which we experience here and hereafter, there is no particular place in that boundless expanse to which we must needs go, and in which we must needs be confined. Just where we die in the body, and "shuffle off this mortal coil," we awake to the new life of the spirit, and continue the ceaseless existence of our conscious being. We, each one, indeed, like Judas, go to our own place,—the place for which we are fitted, the place for which we have prepared ourselves in all our earthly history. But that place is a state or condition. We take with us into the eternal world what we carry with us out of this,—the same inward affections, tastes, propensities, sympathies, and will. Death has no power to change the character of our spiritual nature. It is the body alone that suffers change. The immortal soul lives on. It enters the life that is to come just as it leaves the life that now is. Whether its immediate portion will be hell or heaven there, depends

upon whether its choice was hell or heaven here. There it is free, doubtless, to roam at its will. But it never can fly from itself; and, wherever it wanders, it will ever seek and will ever find, through a law as irresistible as that of gravitation, the companionships and associations that are most congenial to it. It may be that, even now, we are environed, beset, and influenced by unseen spirits, that are good or bad, according as we are ourselves holy or ungodly in heart or life; and, as we awake in the great invisible realms, we may possibly find, that we are in the very midst of beings and surroundings which have been naturally attracted to us by our virtues or vices, by our love of God or love of the world, the flesh, and the devil. So far as modern Spiritualism has emphasized this and kindred doctrines; so far as it has taught that we live, and move, and have our being, in a spiritual universe even more than in the material, and that we are shut in, and acted upon, and greatly affected, by a thousand intelligent agencies and subtle influences of the other world,—it is entitled, I think, to respectful consideration, not to say a most serious and solemn heed. Not that these views are peculiar to Spiritualism, or new to the minds of men; but only that recently they have been more distinctly and forcibly brought before us, and urged upon our attention.

But some will say, “As the dead thus awake to the immortal life, in what body do they come?” We believe in no resurrection of these visible, material forms of flesh and blood; nor do we think that the passages in the Scripture which refer to this subject necessitate what seems to us such a gross, unspiritual interpretation. They speak, indeed, of the resurrection of the dead, the coming forth of the departed from their graves. But this language is natural to us all, whether we believe in the resurrection of the material body or not. It is poetic, striking, inevitable. It

simply means the re-appearance, in the spiritual world or at the judgment, of those who have passed from the mortal life ; not so much their earthly forms, but the vanished ones themselves,— their undying personalities, their imperishable souls.

In what body do they come ? Not the body of flesh and blood. That dissolves, decays. It enters into new forms of vegetable and animal life, and in the process of time its particles become distributed, as it were, throughout the earth. It is consumed, like Wickliffe's bones, by fire ; its ashes given to the stream which bears them on to the sea : and whence shall it come forth in the resurrection ? It is divided and scattered, like many a soldier's, over successive battlefields, where it has been cleft by the sabre, or torn by shot and shell : and how shall it rise again to life, in all its symmetry and entireness ? The arguments or answers by which these fatal objections to the doctrine in question are met, and which claim, that, as God is infinite in power, he can and will, by a wonderful miracle, at the last great day, bring together, from however widely separated points, the rent or disintegrated parts of the bodies of men, and make them whole again ; and that the earth and sea and air will be all alive with disjointed portions of human forms, flying in every direction to seek their once companion dust ; or that some fragment or particle of the lifeless frame shall retain the vital principle until that august time, and that divine power shall rebuild it into an image, which, if it do not contain the identical constituent elements of its predecessor, shall yet be composed of exactly equivalent chemical ingredients,— these arguments, I say, are ludicrously wild and fanciful, and have no sufficient foundation in Scripture, as they have none in common sense.

Rather is it reasonable to suppose, that as there is a nat-

material body, and also a spiritual body, so the latter, or its immortal germ, is even now tabernacling in the former; and that at death it is disengaged from its companion clay, and stands forth at once unharmed by fire or sword, by accident or disease, its texture and organization finer and more delicate than we can now conceive, itself perfect and beautiful for ever. And this is the resurrection. We shall not need to come back, ages hence, from a local heaven or hell, to enter again and re-inhabit the fleshly, material tenements in which we once sinned and suffered, in order to realize the consummation of our eternal destiny. We shall have risen already. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."

Nor in the "house from heaven," with which the soul is thus "clothed upon," does it lose for a moment its sure identity. Character gives to these earthly lineaments its own appropriate moral expression. More fully yet shall it shine through and reveal itself in the spiritual countenance. Something of form and feature which belongs to the material body may thus still lend itself to that which is invisible and imperishable. "All the angels," says Swedenborg, "are forms of their own affections." And then all those peculiar affinities and influences that distinguish any one whom we know or love,—the glance of the eye, the smile of the face, the tone of the voice, the play of the mind and manner, the silent power that steals forth from him, and the certain atmosphere that surrounds him,—by all of which we are enabled so quickly to recognize him as our own,—shall not something of it yet remain, and remain for ever, to make him still the same?

"Lovelier in heaven's sweet climate, yet the same."

The doctrine of the recognition of friends in heaven is one which it seems almost strange that any should ever have

been led to disbelief. Why may not we suppose, that our guardian angels are the dear ones who have passed into the light before us; and that, when for us also the day shall break and the shadows flee away, theirs shall be the sweet, familiar faces that shall first dawn upon us from the dissolving gloom, and theirs the arms that shall extend to us the glad and blissful welcome? Let us never doubt, that, although they may not visibly come to us, yet we shall surely go to them.

And as death is the hour of resurrection, so is it the appropriate signal for the judgment. The scriptural language, which has been supposed to refer to a general assemblage of the race at some future awful day for final judgment, long ago had its fulfilment in the event of the destruction of Jerusalem, and in the momentous circumstances that immediately preceded or followed that important crisis in Jewish history. Or, if indeed it pointed to any thing that was more distant in its application, it looked for its ultimate accomplishment to those transcendent moments when the souls of men were to hasten from the earthly state into the more immediate presence of God. It is then, if ever, that we pass the solemn review, and are sentenced, each one to his proper place. It needs not the endless array of the congregated universe of intelligences, nor yet the audible voice of the Son of man. It is the word which he hath already declared; it is the unrolled map of the terrestrial life; it is the clearer vision of God, whom we have loved or offended; it is the full blaze of those stupendous revelations that await us as we exchange the mortal for immortality: it is these, and such as these, that shall judge us. It is here that we shall unerringly read our righteous awards, and it is in this tremendous presence that we shall rise or sink, according as we have done good or evil.

Nor do we accept the idea or doctrine, that the **status** in which the soul finds itself conditioned, as it enters upon its future life, is fixed and irrevocable for ever. As death has no power to effect a change in the essential character of one's spiritual nature, so it has none, we believe, to destroy his free moral agency. There is nothing in Scripture, or in reason, that teaches us that man will not still be the creature of motives, capable of voluntary choices and subject to the influences of life's ever-unfolding revelations and phenomena. If one who is admitted to the society of the angels should *desire* to surrender his blessed inheritance and accept the portion of the unbelieving and impenitent, who shall say that he cannot and may not do it, however improbable it is that his choice will lie in that direction? Or if one who goes forth into the future, still an alien from God and the blessedness of the heavenly life, should repent of his evil courses, loathe the sin that has reigned over him, hunger and thirst after the immortal good, and aspire to something nobler and better, what shall hinder? Does God at death annul and annihilate for ever the power of the soul to will and to do, freely and fully, whatsoever it listeth? There is no sufficient authority for such a belief. Is it said that the soul, by its life of sin and of its consequences here, renders itself unable to rise above its helpless, undone condition there? The history of spiritual life on earth shows, that no soul can sink so deeply in moral evil as to lose entirely its power to rise by the Divine aid; and who will dare to limit the reach and the might of infinite grace?

“I dare not fix, with mete and bound,
The love and power of God.”

And if it be urged, that no sufficient motives and inducements will be held out in the future to dissuade the sinner

from his sad career, and attract him to goodness and God, it may, we think, be said in reply, that the soul will there have even a *more* vivid apprehension of the consequences of transgression than it could possibly have here; that many of the temptations which now beset it, and which are incident to a life in the flesh and in a world like this, cannot attend it then; and that, in the great spiritual universe, such wondrous manifestations of God's glory will disclose themselves to view, and such mighty and unprecedented agencies and instrumentalities will be employed to complete the grand redemptive work of Christ, that the sufferer must feel the force of unwonted influences and considerations drawing him on and up to heaven. Yes, we believe that repentance is possible in the life that is to come, as well as in the life that now is. And to suppose that whenever, now or hereafter, the soul is truly penitent, and cries for mercy, and struggles for deliverance and blessedness, God is relentless and unmoved, is to make the Deity a passionless and cruel tyrant, and to set at nought the whole tenor of his Holy Word. It is to attribute to him a character which we should abhor in any earthly parent or friend. A God like this is not the one that Christ has revealed to us,—infinitely tender and pitiful, ever longing and yearning for the return of his children, and quick and glad, like the father of the prodigal son, to run forth and welcome his wandering offspring the moment he sees them come back to the paternal embrace and mansion.

And this turning to God, of which I speak, is, we believe, to be, sooner or later, the act and experience of every soul that he has made. Accordingly we reject the doctrine, that any portion of the human race, any child of the Infinite Father, will lie down in everlasting torments. The popular doctrine of future eternal punishment, how-

ever its more skilful and cultivated defenders may seek to relieve it of its fiercer aspects and make it more acceptable to refined and humane people, is one which seems to us utterly inconsistent with the thought of God's infinite love, wisdom, and power; at war with all the best sentiments, instincts, and ideas of the human mind; and at variance with the general teachings and prevailing spirit of the New Testament.

The nature and the attributes of God are the sure pledge of the final extirpation of sin and suffering from the universe, and the commensurate reign, at last, of righteousness, peace, and joy.

There is no word that so fitly describes the very essence and character of the Divine Being, as *Love*. God is Love. That a Being, whose name and nature are Love itself, would create a soul and endow it with immortality, knowing at the same time that it would choose for itself a continued life of sin, and, in consequence, be endlessly and unspeakably miserable in hell, is a proposition whose unreasonableness seems too apparent to merit serious refutation. Infinite Goodness would surely *desire* and *will* the ultimate and eternal happiness of every intelligent creature, and would never rest content so long as a single soul remained still a stranger to the life and bliss of heaven.

What the *Infinite Love* would thus require, *Infinite Wisdom* could devise methods and instrumentalities to accomplish. The goodness of God is no blind force, subject to the caprices of fortune and the contingencies of defeat. Its forecast is as measureless as its kindness, its ways are equal to its wish. If it be the will or desire of the Divine Benevolence that all shall at length be holy and happy, the Divine Wisdom is abundantly able so to order or arrange the course and affairs of Providence, that this glorious result may be attained.

Then what God's *love* is good enough to *dictate*, and what his *wisdom* is adequate to *plan*, his infinite *power* is sufficiently mighty to *fulfil*. As no event can possibly occur to surprise the beneficent, pre-ordained arrangements of his wisdom, so is there no antagonistic element or agency in the universe that can defy his omnipotence to rob it of its victory. His infinite *love*, we say, requires the salvation at last of *all*. His infinite *wisdom* cannot fail to discover the needed *way*. His infinite *power* is ample to execute all that his *goodness* prompts him to *do*; and his *wisdom* directs him how to *perform*.

If, moreover, the doctrine of everlasting punishment is made to involve the idea of the ceaseless continuance of sin in the souls and lives of the lost, God's infinite holiness, also, is pledged to the accomplishment of the sublime consummation to which we look. Moral evil is the one only thing in the universe which God abhors, and which is at war against his righteous government. It would seem that his throne could never be quite secure, as certainly his reign could never be quite complete, except as every trace of its existence shall finally be obliterated from his dominions. His own glory, as well as his very nature, demands that at last it shall cease to be; and any arbitrary eternal infliction of suffering or vengeance, beyond the hour of its extirpation, would be an act not less cruel and horrible in its spirit, than unproductive of any beneficent result.

Or, if it still be urged that God's justice requires that the sinner shall continue for ever to be punished after he shall have repented of his wickedness and forsaken it altogether, we claim that the penalties of Heaven's violated law are remedial in their design and character, and that Divine Justice is never so completely satisfied as when one ceases to do evil and learns to do well. "If we con-

fess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Repentance return, restoration,—this is all that God asks of us; and, when it is secured, there is pardon, reconciliation, and peace. How long the memory of transgression may linger still in the mind, and how much the soul, by its life of sin on earth, may be retarded in its great march of progress through eternity, we do not know. But this is not the endless retribution which the popular doctrine of everlasting torment contemplates. Certain effects or consequences of sin may possibly thus endure for ever, or they may not. But we cannot believe that they will, in any event, interfere with the glorious growth, joy, and rest, which, we are persuaded, are the never-ending destiny of all who live.

Against this doctrine of the endless damnation of souls in hell, all the finer sensibilities, the humaner feelings, and the better hopes and prayers of our hearts, rise up in united protest. What a commentary upon the dogma in question it is, that, as one of its advocates has recently said, its opposite theory of the final and universal salvation of the race is "the beautiful dream of noble natures"! And so it is. Whatever is divine within us, all that is pure and true and good, calls for an end, at last, to every form of sin and woe, and for the perpetual and illimitable reign of righteousness and joy. And that which is divine in our own souls is but a transcript of the excellence and love that constitute the nature of our God.

And all this is the general lesson of Scripture as well. However the more gloomy views of the ancient pagan world, or the fanciful speculations of rabbinical writers, may have affected the minds of the authors of the New Testament, and colored their allusions to this general subject, yet the prevailing spirit of the gospel, and its apostolic prophecies concerning the great future that is to be,

afford us a sufficient foundation for our faith in the cheering, thrilling doctrine which we hold. Christ reveals to us a God who is an infinite Father, and whose love cannot for a moment be measured by the affection of any earthly parent. It is ever, with him, the essential spirit and purpose of the Divine Being to seek and to save that which is lost. To the words *eternal* and *everlasting*, as he employs them with reference to the future retributions of the wicked, the most enlightened Biblical interpreters more and more agree in giving the sense or meaning of only an indefinitely prolonged continuance of time; as when, in other portions of the Bible, they are used to describe the protracted, but by no means never-ending, duration of the hills and mountains, or of the possession which the Israelites received, as they entered the land of Canaan. And not alone the properly understood language and drift of the writings of the Evangelists, but also the sublime promises and prospects by which the Epistles give character to the mighty future,—when an end is put to sin, and death is swallowed up in victory, and God shall be all in all,—necessitate the conviction that every being created in the Divine image shall at last be the heir of life and heaven. It were easy to wage a war of isolated and controverted texts. For every passage which you shall adduce in support of the doctrine of everlasting punishment, I will bring forward another that shall make it ineffectual to your purpose. We choose rather to find out the true spirit of Christ, and the general teaching of the New Testament; assured that here is given to us the surest revelation of the mind of God himself. That single parable of the prodigal son is, in itself alone, well-nigh enough to warrant the position we have taken, and to vindicate the views we hold so dear.

Liberal Christianity is a Christianity that recognizes the ceaseless development of the human soul, and the ever-

lasting progress of the race in truth, purity, love, power, and happiness. In the great life of sin and change, now or hereafter, the soul or the race may, for a time, be hindered or set back in its destined course; but it will only be to be carried forward again, at length, to the realization of some better hope. Mysterious as may seem the spiritual marches and countermarches of humanity, the end and purpose of them all, we believe, is victory and glory. God is in history and in providence, guiding and overruling all things to the universal good. There is nothing which he has created or permitted in his vast dominions that shall not attest his infinite and eternal love. The experience of sin, perhaps, will but give, by awful contrast, the needed meaning and beauty to the holiness of heaven. Out of the depths of earthly suffering the soul most truly rises to the heights of celestial rapture. Life derives a new significance and splendor from the great fact of death and decay. It is evil and pain and death together that will form the dark background of the ever-brightening picture of the immortal life, bringing out into more visible relief and glorious attractiveness the realizations which it portrays. A beautiful dream, if you will; but it is one that is not only in harmony with our best thought of God, the holiest longings of the soul, and the noblest interpretations of the Scriptures, but is the constantly growing faith of Christendom. The sects may profess to believe, and may try to think they believe, the doctrine of everlasting punishment; but they do not and cannot succeed. Ministers may firmly retain it in the creeds of the Churches; but most of them are afraid to preach it, and their audiences will not hear it. Parents who subscribe to it, reject it when their unconverted children die. It is a dogma out of which the life has departed for ever. There is not a single doctrine of the popular faith, beside, in regard to which there is such a

wide-spread, latent unbelief as exists in respect to this. Whatever men may say or subscribe to, their general daily life and conduct show, that the idea of the endless agony of all who die in their sins is one that has no hold upon their minds or hearts; and the retention of it, under such circumstances, in their articles of faith, and the persistent attempt which they make to persuade themselves that they accept it and credit it, when they inwardly know they do not and cannot, and when their constant spirit and manner attest so clearly their disbelief of it, seem to us like something that is essentially dishonest and pernicious. The world is coming to accept more cheering and ennobling views of providence and destiny. The best and brightest minds of the Church of to-day have discarded, or are discarding, the doctrine. The advanced thought of the philosophical and intellectual world disowns it. The truest tendencies of the age are away from it. Art no longer revels in the delineations of its awful horrors; and poetry finds no more its inspiration in its indescribable miseries, but breathes forth the pure hope and noble faith of humanity in some such strain as this of Tennyson, in whose "In Memoriam" are contained, says Robertson, "the most satisfactory things that have ever been said on the Future State:" —

"Oh, yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivelled in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain!"

Behold! we know not any thing:
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last,—far off,—at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.”

The life of progress, of which I have spoken, is one that necessarily involves a life of action. Strange views have prevailed in the Christian world in regard to what constitutes the rest of heaven. Weary of the sicknesses and sufferings of the body, the temptations and conflicts of life, and the changes and uncertainties of the world around us, men have sighed for a sphere where all might be repose and permanence for ever; and have thought of heaven as a region into which they should enter, and be at once perfectly happy, undisturbed, and content, eternally hymning their songs and waving their palms. But this is not the rest of heaven. The rest of the soul,—what is it? It is, indeed, a sense of the divine favor; it is a consciousness of purity; it is a likeness to Christ, and oneness with God; it is harmony in its fullest, highest meaning. But it is something besides all this, and something upon which all this is conditioned, and with which it is for ever associated,—a wise and vigorous exercise of the powers and faculties of our God-given natures. Growth is a law of our being, and is dependent upon activity. Without work, struggle, and aspiration, we are not happy: we rust, and we retrograde. There is always a keen delight in putting forth our energies for some noble object or end; and it is thus that we inevitably develop into what is larger and better. The life of heaven, hereafter as now, is a life of constant, ceaseless exertion, while it must needs be free from the pain, fatigue, weariness, and discomforts which so often attend the exertion of the body here. It is because we always in our minds associate these with the idea of activity, that we so often indulge the hope that our future

state will be one of profound tranquillity and inertia. But these constitute no part of the inheritance of the blessed life that is to be. Unencumbered and unembarrassed by the ills of the flesh and the hinderances of its present material surroundings, the soul will there enjoy a freedom which it here has never known ; and the very awakening and tension of its glorious, unfettered, and emancipated strength, will be to it a zest and joy more blissful far than the most favored condition of supine, ignoble security of which it can possibly conceive. It is thus, and thus alone, that the immortal spirit ascends, for ever and ever, nearer and still nearer to God, more and more comes to be like God, and loses itself deeper and deeper in God's bosom of immeasurable and eternal love.

Heaven, too, is a house of many mansions ; a world of innumerable scattered circles and communities of happy residents ; of endlessly different stages or degrees of intellectual, moral, and spiritual progress ; of infinitely varied interests of life and departments of service,— where every good taste and talent can find their legitimate sphere of exercise and enjoyment, and nothing will ever be lost. Not in vain, not without some wise and beneficent purpose and end, has God created his children with such wonderfully diversified powers and capacities ; endowing each of us with peculiar gifts, and fitting us every one, by a discipline all our own, for a certain work and mission, which no one else is qualified so well to fulfil. For some distinct and definite object, God has made and fashioned us all ; and it is for this that his providence is ordered to educate and discipline us. In every period of our earthly life, we are reminded how the heavenly Father has sought to prepare us for present duties and responsibilities by previous gifts, instructions, and guidance. The wise improvement of all that he vouchsafes or sends us, is the best possible prepara-

tion for any sphere or service to which we may be called. It is so in the life that now is: it will be so in the life that is to come. Life is a perpetual school; and all the lessons and influences that enter into it, or belong to it, have a vast and most momentous bearing upon life's great future. There, in the mighty world that lies before us,—so illimitable in extent, so varied in its interests, so complicated in its relations, so limitless in its opportunities,—there will be ample scope for every faculty and energy and attainment of which we may be the possessors. The wise shall continue yet to instruct, and the seeker still to explore. The benevolent shall find other objects of their disinterested care and love; and the strong and brave marshal and lead, as of yore, the ranks of the redeemed. The children of song will tune their voices in heaven to diviner music than they ever discoursed on earth, and the votaries of beauty will there discern more perfect visions of loveliness and grandeur than ever enchanted them here. The lips of eloquence shall be touched with a more celestial fire to speak of the wonders and glories of eternity; and the devotees of science shall enter into fresh and measureless realms of truth and knowledge, to discover and unveil their eternal laws and principles. And there, too, is the life of mutual helpfulness and disinterested service, each assisting the rest in every noble way,—the strong befriending the weak, the enlightened the ignorant, and the far-advanced and the well-experienced in the better world those who come fresh from the earthly shores; while fond affection and tender pity shall descend from the serener elevations of power and peace, to bear heavenly succor to the objects of their concern and love on the slopes or vales below: all combining, sympathizing, and working together to reach at length the distant summits above and beyond. Well does the venerable Dr. Beecher say, "Excepting exemption from sin,

intense, vigorous, untiring action is the greatest pleasure of the mind. I could hardly wish to enter heaven, did I believe its inhabitants were idly to sit by purling streams, fanned by balmy airs. Heaven, to be a place of happiness, must be a place of activity. Has the far-reaching mind of Newton ceased its profound investigations? Has David hung up his harp, as useless as the dusty arms in Westminster Abbey? Has Paul, glowing with God-like enthusiasm, ceased itinerating the universe of God? Are Peter and Cyprian and Edwards and Payson and Evarts idling away eternally in mere psalm-singing? Heaven is a place of restless activity, the abode of never-tiring thought. David and Isaiah will sweep nobler and loftier strains in eternity; and the minds of saints, unclogged by cumbersome clay, will for ever feast on the banquet of rich and glorious truth."

Without this prospect of constant and everlasting action, growth, and progress, of which I have spoken; without this hope on which I have dwelt, of the ultimate restoration and felicity of all who are created in the image of God,—life and providence would be a dark and awful enigma. There would be no sure relief to the soul; and work would lose its highest inspiration and joy. It is the blessed thought that every thing is moving resistlessly and unfailingly on to such an unspeakably glorious consummation, and that all shall yet be well,—

“No wanderer lost,
A family in heaven,”—

it is this that solves every dreadful problem, buoys us up in all our doubts and fears and sorrows, and gives a thrill of delight and an unwonted element of power to be and to do all that God requires. It is this that casts a cheerful aspect over all the ways and mysteries of the life that now is and of that which is to come, and makes us strong and

brave to go forward to meet whatever the years and ages and cycles of eternity may have in reserve for us. And it is this inspiring and uplifting doctrine which, it seems to me, constitutes a vital part of the Liberal faith which we profess, and which ought to be more strongly emphasized and more prominently set forth to view by us than it has been in the past. We are, as a denomination, false to our trust, recreant to our principles, unmindful of our opportunity, and heedless of the calls of Providence, if we fail to make known to men, as in all the sad, revolving centuries, it has never yet been understood, that God is an infinite Father, and that every soul he has made is sealed to glory honor, and immortality.

Be it ours, while moving amidst these shifting, shadowy things of earth, not to be unmindful of the world to which we go. Its stupendous, enduring realities ; its exalted and saintly companionships ; its rapturous greetings and everlasting re-unions ; its inestimable privileges and infinite possibilities ; its matchless splendors and overwhelming glories ; its joy, its love, its praise, and its rest ; God himself over-arching, encircling, and filling all, and Christ leading his followers yet to living fountains of water,— it is these, and such as these, that invite us on, and that, while we are in the world, should lift us above its power and evil, that, when the hour of departure comes, we may go forth, with a strong and immortal trust, to realize in glad fruition what now is only the object of faith.

“ I know not what the future hath
 Of marvel or surprise,
Assured alone that life and death
 His mercy underlies.

And so, beside the silent sea,
 I wait the muffled oar:
No harm from Him can come to me,
 On ocean or on shore.

I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air:
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond his love and care.

O brothers! if my faith is vain,
If hopes like these betray,
Pray for me, that my feet may gain
The sure and safer way.

And thou, O Lord! by whom are seen
Thy creatures as they be,
Forgive me if too close I lean
My human heart on Thee."

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UNITARIANISM AND “ORTHODOXY.”

BY

REV. WILLIAM C. TENNEY.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

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TEN POINTS OF DIFFERENCE

BETWEEN

UNITARIANISM AND “ORTHODOXY.”

BY REV. WILLIAM C. TENNEY.

IN the following pages I shall present statements, briefly contrasting my own theological views with the current, popular “orthodoxy.” I prefer to speak in the first person, on account of the diversities of opinion existing in our Unitarian fellowship, pledged, as it is, to a broad-thoughted, large-hearted liberality. Disclaiming thus the right to speak for others, I nevertheless avow my confident conviction, that the opinions given below as my own express substantially the belief prevailing among Unitarian Christians everywhere. And in the statements I make concerning the common Trinitarian belief, I neglect the points of difference among the various “orthodox” denominations, singling out only those doctrines in which they all agree. My object is not to *argue* (except incidentally), but to *state*.

I. “Orthodoxy” represents God as existing in *three persons*, who are yet but *one God*. These three persons are the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; each eternal, each a conscious personality; each infinite in physical and

moral attributes, such as power, wisdom, holiness, mercy, truth; each entitled to whatever can be declared of the word "God," and, all together, *only* God. The term can be used of each in turn and of all collectively, so that I may say the Father is God with all the attributes of God, the Son is God with all the attributes of God, and the Holy Spirit is God with all the attributes of God, and yet there is but one God,—the Father, Son, AND Holy Spirit. Each may be worshipped as very God, and all three are to be worshipped as the *One* God.

I believe, in the words of the apostle Paul, that "to us there is but one God, the Father;" the supreme, only object of adoration; that the doctrine of the Trinity, as the view just given is called, cannot be stated in Bible language, and gradually grew up in the Church from Greek and Oriental metaphysics; that the existence and perfection of the adorable God, in one person, the Father, is clear, simple, biblical, true, spiritual, practical.

II. The popular theology views *Jesus Christ* as a being made up of two natures, united in one person, that is, in one consciousness, one will; one nature infinite and divine, the other finite and human; one, the second person in the Trinity, existing from all eternity, the other nature human, limited, commencing in time. *He* (mark the word *he*, which denotes personality) is infinite and finite, mortal and yet deathless; knew all things, yet could say "no man knoweth the hour, not even the Son, but the Father only;" *he* was the eternal God, yet was born of a human mother; *he* created the world, yet died the death of the cross on Calvary.

I believe that, while all men are sons of God, Jesus Christ was pre-eminently THE "Son of God;" the chosen and best beloved Son in moral likeness to, and spiritual

sympathy with, the one God, the universal Father; the Son in the greatness of his mission, the glory and completeness of his moral character. In him I see reflected the attributes of the Infinite God, acting on a finite scale. He is to me the type of perfected human nature, the being who, by the power of his life and death, helps mankind up toward his own level. He is, in my view, the Mediator, not as standing between God and man, and acting an official part, but as allowing all of God morally to manifest himself through him; the glory of the infinite and paternal God, beaming in the softened light of humanity. As to his rank in the realm of being, there are wide differences of opinion among Unitarians; but, for myself, I do not hesitate to say, I believe him to have been the son of Joseph and Mary, and the doctrine of his miraculous conception, gradually growing up as a legend in the age succeeding his wonderful life, to have attached itself to the fragmentary biographies of him in "Matthew" and "Luke."

III. The popular theology insists, I suppose without exception, on the *native total depravity* of mankind, however variously explained. I understand it to assert, that man is averse from, and unable to do, any good thing, till regenerated by the power of the Divine Spirit; thoroughly and totally corrupt by nature in motive and in act, and that sin is an infinite evil, whose penalty is eternal suffering.

I believe the phrase "native depravity" (I care not how defined) to be a contradiction in terms, for no being is blamable for what he cannot help; and *total depravity* to be about as false a doctrine as can be in fact and in philosophy. The amount of sin in the world (and by *sin* I mean the conscious, voluntary doing what the doer believes to

be, or might have ascertained to be, *wrong*) is indeed fearfully great. Sin is a condition of human discipline and education. Frail, imperfect man, to attain to what God has destined for him, must pass through its momentous trial. Pascal expressed it all when he said, "Oh the grandeur and the littleness, the excellence and the corruption, the majesty and the meanness, of life!" Inherited *propensities*, who can deny? Inherited *guilt*—how can it be believed? Self-love is a natural and therefore commendable principle; the *excess* of self-love is *selfishness*, which is sin. To rightly *proportion* the various elements of our nature is the work of life. Sin is the not attempting this, or but partly attempting; more or less culpable as the case may be, never quite irremediable.

IV. The *atonement* "orthodoxy" regards as an act, which is the only procuring means of salvation, rescuing the believer in it from eternal torment, which were else his doom. I think I do not misrepresent the opinions of any one of the prevalent sects in stating, that, by their theology, those who die in infancy, inheriting, as they do, a corrupt and totally depraved nature, are saved from perdition in a future world only by the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. So encompassed by embarrassing objections is this doctrine, which is nevertheless the corner-stone of the "orthodox" faith, that a multitude of theories and explanations have been put forth to relieve and rationalize it. Common to all is the belief that the human race has incurred the penalty of endless woe on account of sin, and by no unaided efforts of its own can escape this doom. The death of Jesus Christ is a divine expedient for the rescuing man from this deserved fate, while saving the justice and honor and truth of God. Hence, a person of the eternal three in the Godhead becomes united with a

being of human birth and experience, who expires at length in the agonies of the cross to reconcile God to man. Some say Jesus Christ suffered and died only as man; others say he suffered also as God. Some regard his death as a literal sacrifice to appease the Father; others view his crucifixion as a scenic exhibition of God's wrath against sin, and the whole plan of atonement as a governmental scheme for self-vindication. It is a penalty paid, a debt discharged, a satisfaction exacted, or a conflict of divine attributes harmonized. Christ's holiness is imputed to believers; their sins are imputed to him. He suffers the agony due to them for ever and ever, and so God's justice is satisfied and he can forgive (how "forgive," when the debt has been already paid, I have never seen explained). All agree in saying that Christ's death had a reconciling effect on the mind of God, and that those who are saved are saved by the procuring virtue of what Christ has endured and done for them.

Both which assertions I absolutely deny. God never required appeasing: his very nature is Love. He needed to have no way opened in order to pardon: the way was always open. His justice and mercy demanded no harmonizing, for they were never at even so much as *constructive* variance. Christ's death had no special efficacy, no isolated office. It was the crowning sacrifice of his disinterested, devoted life, for the good of men. And whatever of saving efficacy is in the life, work, sufferings, and death of Jesus is wrought *upon* and *within* the heart; has no substitutional, sacrificial, in fine, *purchasing* power *over* and *for* us; but a touching, persuading, winning, converting power on the opened and sympathizing mind and heart of erring, estranged, frail, sinful man. I lack words to express my sense of the incoherence, irrationality, and general *shockingness* of the common view of the atone-

ment. Sin and holiness are no matters of imputation; penalty cannot be substitutional, and in none of God's works in nature can we find a hint of any thing so confused, awkward, incongruous, out of the divine style (so to speak), as this whole scheme, elaborated, I would say in passing, in the thick darkness of the dark ages. Christ's work is to reconcile man to God, not God to man; and he does this by revealing and illustrating God's tender, patient, parental, forgiving, all-comprehending, unwearyed love. The spectacle on Calvary was no signal of the reversal of the condition of a part of a doomed and helpless world; but "I, if I be lifted up," said Jesus, "will draw all men unto me." And he is doing it: the blessed work is ever going on.

V. *Regeneration*, by the prevailing theology, is the supernatural moving of the Holy Spirit upon the heart, by which the sinner is instantaneously rescued from the ranks of those who are exposed to unending misery, and enrolled in the number of those to whom, through Christ's merits, eternal bliss is promised.

Regeneration is, in my view, the changing from irreligion to practical religiousness, by whatever means brought about, and whether by rapid or gradual steps. And it saves a man, in that he becomes better, and thus more blessed. In its nature it is eminently rational and practical, and is the result of the co-operation of the spirit of man with that spirit of God whose breathings on the human soul are never entirely suspended. Enthroning Christianity as the rule of life is regeneration.

VI. The current "orthodoxy" limits *probation* to this life, and makes the condition of the soul in a future state of existence one of fixed and perfect and eternal joy on

the one hand, or, on the other, of unutterable woe, for ever and ever, world without end. These fleeting earthly years, so infinitesimally few and brief, and so crowded with ignorance and imperfection, are the irrecoverable probation-time, dismissing innumerable millions on millions to a state of immitigable anguish as unending as the future eternity of God himself.

While, to state such a doctrine is to refute it, I will only say, that, not denying a probationary character to every period of our being, I regard the more suitable term for life to be *disciplinary* or *educational*. It is impossible for me to believe, that the eternal destiny of all spirits is suspended on the volitions and actions of this veriest infancy of their being. Every period of life is probationary and preparatory to those which follow; and I believe it will be so hereafter, not less than here. Death is but an incident, an *early* incident, of man's existence; and God, who is Love, who sees the end from the beginning, who fills all time, all worlds, eternity itself, whose Providence is all-comprehending, whose mercy is unwearied, is leading on, *educating*, ruling, overruling for his own wise and kind purpose, for ever and ever; and no creature he has made, will he leave abandoned and finally undone.

VII. The *Bible* is regarded by the popular Trinitarian belief as the infallibly inspired oracle of absolute truth, the correctness of all whose teachings from the opening chapter of Genesis to the final word of the Book of Revelation must be unwaveringly believed and inflexibly maintained. It is habitually spoken of as THE "word of God."

The Bible is to me a book made up of many books, of a great variety of character, written under great diversities

of circumstance and culture, with the evident traces of human opinions on a multitude of topics, in connection with the noblest and most resplendent spiritual truths, so immeasurably in advance of their age as to indicate a divine inspiration. History, biography, poetry, and drama are scattered through its many pages, imparting moral lessons of unequalled value and richness. It shuts us not up to the belief in a completed and oracular infallibility, an endowment it neither possesses nor claims. With very unequal merits in its different portions, it is the "auto-biography of human nature from its infancy to its perfection;" and its crowning excellence is in the glimpses it gives us of the Divine Man, whose transcendent life is, and is ever to be, for the nourishment and growth of humanity. So would I read it, discriminately, reverentially, gratefully, but not allowing it to seal up the understanding against ever-unfolding and developing religious truth.

VIII. And this leads me to remark, that, in the ordinary theological treatment of it, *reason* is alternately patronized and discarded. Against Romanism and its dogmas and rites, the popular Protestantism uses reason with uncompromising energy, vehemence, and ridicule, allowing the claim of no self-styled infallible church as interpreter of an infallible Bible. But to free, inquiring, criticism, philosophy, and science, this same Protestantism utters deprecations and warnings against blind and false and proud and misleading human reason, and throws itself back for absolute truth on an assumed infallible Book, though interpreted by fallible men.

I believe in the trustworthiness of reason, using, of course, all the helps of Bible, church, history, criticism, and science, of which it can avail itself. Say what any

man or all men will, of the poverty and fallibility of reason, whatever is plainly irrational we are bound to reject, wherever we may meet with it. To me Jesus Christ is the great spiritual authority, because, having carefully examined his religion, I find it coincident with the highest reason of which I know.

IX. "Orthodoxy" preaches *a resurrection of the material body*, — a dogma I reject as being neither scriptural nor rational, but utterly inadmissible and confusing. It looks for a future visible coming of Christ in the sky to hold an assize of the universe; the Judge awarding to the awakening and arising myriads of the dead an eternity of bliss, or shutting up in an everlasting prison. I believe in his figurative coming in the first Christian century, when Jerusalem was destroyed, and the new religion, liberated from Jewish entanglements, became universal. I believe in his spiritual coming again and again, the enthronement of his truth as the rule of moral award in the conscience of the world through the ages. With no dramatic pomp, no sounding trumpet, no rending tombs and awaking dead, does he come to judgment, but in the secrecy of the individual soul, in the "power and great glory" of his widening, purifying, and elevating truth and love.

X. *Faith* is, in the common view, the believing, with a realizing confidence, in the Trinity, human depravity, the all-sufficiency of the vicarious atonement, eternal retribution, and the infallible inspiration of the whole of the Bible; and salvation (deliverance from sin, and particularly its eternal torments) results from this belief. Whoso believes ~~not~~ thus in Christ "must ^{*}everlastingly perish."

Faith in Jesus is, I maintain, no adhesion to any array of dogmas, mysterious or otherwise, but sympathy with

him in the whole spirit of his words and works. He who has this faith is saved, — delivered, that is, from the worst mental and spiritual miseries, here and hereafter ; he who believeth not is damned (the correct translation of the original Greek word is *condemned* or *judged*), left, that is, to grope in the blindness and misery, the broodings, the repinings, the bitterness, the rebellion, or the discouragement and despair of sin. Christ came to bring light and life. *Believe*, that is, *trust*, and be saved. Dogmas cannot save. His *spirit of life* CAN.

It will not improbably be said by some who read these pages, We cannot believe that the doctrines above recited are all maintained by the dominant sects. Certainly we have seldom or never heard them brought prominently or emphatically forward in their pulpits. There is a softening of the old tenets, a growing liberality of opinion, and, after all, less discrepancy than you suppose between their views and your own. To which I reply, All these articles are to be found in the confessions of faith of the Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed, Congregational, Baptist, and Methodist Churches. Whatever suppression or softening of obnoxious tenets may be enforced on their pulpits by the power of a growing liberalism and the imperious demands of policy, the tenets themselves are all imbedded in their creeds. And let a clergyman in one of these denominations dare to question, *in public*, the truth of the Trinity, the Godhead of Christ, the vicarious atonement, the infallibility of the Bible, or eternal hell-torments, his official decapitation, by an ecclesiastical court-martial, is almost sure to speedily follow.

Reader, which series of these contrasted views appears the more simple and reasonable? Which would seem to have the more faith in the fatherly love of God? Which

presents the more hopeful and cheering view of human life and human destiny? Which is the less likely to be leavened with a grim and jealous exclusionism? Which is apparently the more in accordance with what science, in its every department, is yearly making known? Which invites and encourages the more free, wide-reaching, and fearless inquiry? Which the more enlarges the mind and expands the sympathies? Which gives the wider sweep and more noble realm to religion? I ask not which has the more terrors and the more raptures, and abounds the more in startling and agonizing and immediately telling effects. But which finds the more fit place in the grand, even if slow, quiet, gradual, but in the end far more beneficial, work of *educating* man, in the broadest and noblest sense of that word? Time is preparing the answer to these questions: I fearlessly anticipate its replies.

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JESUS CHRIST.

WAS JESUS OF NAZARETH IDENTICAL
WITH THE ALMIGHTY CREATOR?

BY

REV. A. P. PEABODY, D.D. .

REPRINTED, BY REQUEST, FROM HIS "LECTURES ON CHRISTIAN
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JESUS CHRIST.

BY REV. A. P. PEABODY, D.D

My Father is greater than I.—JOHN XIV. 28.

THE question of THE SUPREME DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST will be my subject this evening. I shall reserve for the next lecture, an explicit statement of my own views with reference to our Saviour's personal rank and character and I shall now confine myself to the simple question: *Was Jesus of Nazareth identical with the Almighty Creator?*

Before entering upon my subject, suffer me to make one preliminary remark. There are two modes employed in proving doctrines from the Bible. One is the quotation of single texts, without reference to the context, or to the analogy of other portions of Scripture. The other is based upon the comparison of a text with its context, and of Scripture with Scripture; and has reference rather to the general tone and spirit of the sacred writings, or of particular books and passages, than to insulated words and phrases. The latter, I hardly need say, is the only true mode. By the former, any and every doctrine might be established; and its use has, in fact, led to most of the broad differences among Christians, and of the exceedingly wide departures from "the simplicity that is in Christ."

No book in the world could bear such rules and modes of interpretation, as have been applied to the Bible. In all books, except scientific treatises, free use is made of metaphor and hyperbole, which are always defined and limited by what goes before and what follows, but which, taken by themselves and explained literally, would imply the most puerile and absurd notions. Now the fashion among theologians has been, to set up the seeming signification of some three or four isolated clauses in the Bible, as overweighing the clear and acknowledged tenor of the entire Scriptures, as if the inspired writers could have failed to recognize constantly, and to state explicitly, any fundamental doctrine of the religion which they taught.

I can best illustrate the prevalent mode of Scriptural interpretation, by supposing a case. Suppose that, fifteen or twenty centuries hence, there should be remaining some two or three authentic biographies of Napoleon Bonaparte. Suppose that in one of these, written by an admiring Frenchman, it should be said of him: "He was a very God among his soldiers, — adoring millions prostrated themselves before him, — he took in the nations of the earth at a glance, — his will was omnipotent." Suppose that in another of these biographies, written by a bigoted English tory, it should be said of him: "He was a very fiend incarnate, — the prince of darkness never let loose upon earth a more fearful angel of destruction." Suppose that, though, elsewhere throughout these books, Napoleon was perpetually talked of as a man, and the books, taken as a whole, made utter nonsense upon the supposition that he was not a man, there yet should arise a set of critics, who maintained that Napoleon was a divine being, and another set, who maintained that he was a demon, — these two classes of critics would aptly represent the generality of modern theologians and biblical interpreters.

The true mode of interpretation obviously is, first, to get at the general tone and spirit of the book, or books, which we wish to interpret, and then, when we find a passage of difficult, doubtful, or ambiguous signification, to seek for it the interpretation, or to give it that one of several possible interpretations, which best accords with the tone and spirit of the whole. Thus, if the entire New Testament from beginning to end, if every discourse of our Saviour, if every exposition of Christian doctrine made by the apostles, if the whole tone of spiritual phraseology, declares, or necessarily implies, the inferiority of the Son to the Father, and yet there are some half-dozen or more single texts which seem to teach his supreme divinity, but admit of a different interpretation, I contend, that we are bound to interpret these texts in accordance with the voice of Scripture taken collectively; and I also maintain that, where there is any reasonable doubt with regard to the reading, or the punctuation of a passage, we are bound to prefer that reading, or that mode of punctuation, which best accords with the rest of the New Testament.

But let me not be misunderstood. I by no means say that half a dozen texts, or even a single text of Scripture, may not be sufficient to establish a religious doctrine. On the other hand, there are subjects spoken of but once or twice, on which I derive as definite and firm an opinion, from one or two texts, as I should from a volume. And if our Saviour were named but six times, or but once, in a series of books proffering the claims to plenary and conclusive authority, which, in my view, the New Testament proffers, and if, each of those six times, or that once, he were spoken of as the supreme God, I should then believe him to be the supreme God. But the case is very different. He speaks of himself, and is spoken of, many hundred times, in the New Testament. Take away some half-

dozen, or, at most, a very few of these texts, and no one will contend that there remains a single case, in which the phraseology does not necessarily imply inferiority to the eternal Father. These few texts, as I interpret them, imply no other doctrine. But yet my Trinitarian brethren contend that they teach our Saviour's supreme divinity. Admitting, for the moment, that such were their most obvious meaning, the question is, whether they ought to outweigh the hundreds of texts that teach a different doctrine. Christ cannot be both a self-existent and a created being, both God and the Son of God, both equal and inferior to the Father. And if he, many hundreds of times, calls himself, and is called by his authorized interpreters, a created being, the Son of God, and inferior to the Father, then it seems to me that the few texts, which might bear a different meaning, ought to be interpreted in accordance with these hundreds of texts. With this general statement of facts in the case, I presume that no Trinitarian would find fault. But the Trinitarian would maintain that the hundreds of texts ought to be interpreted by the few.

These things premised, I now proceed to exhibit the chief reasons, why I find myself constrained to regard our Saviour as a created and subordinate being.

In the first place, our Saviour never declares himself the supreme God, in any of the discourses or conversations recorded in the gospels. This is not a doctrine, for which it is common to appeal to our Saviour's own words; and yet, often as he spake of himself, and plain and confidential as was his intercourse with his disciples during the last scenes of his life, it hardly seems possible that he should have left them without a hint of his true nature and glory. I know of but two of his own sayings, which are even quoted as referring to his supreme divinity; and I doubt whether these would be quoted in a serious argument.

One of these is, "I and my Father are one,"* which he sufficiently explains, when he afterwards prays for his disciples, "that they may be one, even as we are one."† The other is, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father,"‡ which, in the next verse, he explains by saying: "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" I am astonished that this should ever have been regarded as a Trinitarian proof-text. I know not a more decidedly anti-Trinitarian text in the Bible. For, if there be three distinct persons in the God-head, seeing one of them is surely not seeing the other,—seeing the Father is not seeing the Son. But if, as Unitarians believe, Christ dwelt in God, and God in him, if Christ was the image, the representative of the Father, then he, who had seen him, had seen the Father,—he, who had been conversant with the image, had become acquainted with the attributes of the original.

If our Saviour were indeed the supreme God; a fact, no less striking and unaccountable than his own silence on the subject, is, that the apostles did not proclaim him as God in their preaching to the unbelieving Jews and Gentiles. The cross, the ignominy, the lowly and suffering estate of Jesus, was the great stumbling-block to those among whom they preached; and it was, therefore, a prime object with them to extol and exalt him, to set forth his claims upon the reverence of man, and to exhibit his intrinsic greatness and excellence. Was he, who was despised and rejected of men, indeed the Lord God Almighty? Of this fact, then, before all things else, would Peter have assured the unbelieving Jews, and Paul the inquisitive and credulous Athenians. This doctrine, so momentous, could not have been suppressed in preaching, to such a degree, as

* John x. 30.

† John xvii. 22.

‡ John xiv. 9.

not once to find its way into the numerous discourses contained in the Acts of the Apostles. If Peter and Paul did not preach it, they cannot have believed it. If they did preach it, the eminently careful, faithful historian, St. Luke, could not have omitted this most prominent and striking point in their preaching.

I now offer you a consideration of very great, and, it seems to me, decisive weight. If our Saviour were the almighty Creator, there was a time when his disciples first became aware of the fact; for they could not have believed it from the beginning. When Peter rebuked him, when they all forsook him, when they went weeping to his sepulchre, they could not have regarded him as God. Now, whenever they learned the fact of his supreme divinity, it must have wrought a marvellous and entire change in their feelings and conduct,—it must have created the most strongly marked epoch in the experience of their lives. It must have been with the utmost awe, with emotions of overpowering fulness, that they ascertained that the Creator of all worlds had been dwelling with them, calling them his brethren, and submitting to their petulant and inconstant humors,—had broken bread for them, and even washed their feet. Must not such a stupendous discovery have left some trace of itself in the sacred record? Could it have taken place, without at least some notice of the time when, and the circumstances under which it was made? Did they first become aware of this fact after his resurrection? How then can we account for their preserving their former familiar, fraternal style of intercourse with him till the morning of the ascension? And yet their conversation with him on that very morning differs not in the least, as to its general tone and character, from those which they had held with him before his death. Or was it on the day of Pentecost that this amazing fact

first became known to them? If so, would not Peter's discourse have been full of this new revelation? Could he have so entirely veiled the light that had just burst upon him, as coolly to commence his discourse: "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him," and to utter not a single word, which the most astute critic can torture into a recognition of the deity of Christ? But it is impossible for the Trinitarian to say when the apostles were first apprised of this truth; nor is there, in the gospels or the Acts of the Apostles, the faintest trace of such a discovery having been made at any time. Now I could more easily account for the omission of all notice of our Saviour's birth, or death, or resurrection, or ascension, than for the omission of the announcement of this,—the most amazing and momentous fact of all,—indeed, the most interesting and important fact in the world's whole history.

I next remark that the whole phraseology of the New Testament, with regard to our Saviour, implies his created existence, and subordinate rank. In the first place, he is constantly called the *Son* of God. The word *Son*, as applied to him, either has, or has not, a meaning. If it has no meaning, then must it have been employed by our Saviour and his apostles in idle mockery of man's understanding,—a supposition unworthy to be entertained for a moment, and yet one, which our Trinitarian brethren cannot, it seems to me, entirely disavow. But if the word *Son* does mean any thing, the least that it can imply is, that the Son owes his existence to the Father, therefore is not self-existent, did not then exist from all eternity, and consequently is not God.

I would next advert to the mode in which our Saviour uniformly speaks of himself. Here are some of his declara-

tions, which I might multiply indefinitely: "My Father is greater than I."* "I can of mine own self do nothing."† "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself; but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works."‡ "I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me."§ "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me."|| "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in Heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."¶ "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son."** "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God."†† "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God."†† But I might go on in this way, and quote from every chapter in the gospels, and from every verse in which our Saviour speaks, and show you every attribute of supreme divinity disclaimed, over and over again, from his own lips, without your being able to point to a single instance, in which he claims for himself any exclusively divine attribute. I might, also, show him to you praying to his Father, spending whole nights in supplication to Him, beseeching Him, if possible, to take from him the cup of death, and commanding his departing spirit into the Father's hands.

It is said that Christ spoke and did thus in his human nature. To this I reply, in the first place, that the doctrine of the two natures of Christ is not claimed, even by its advocates, as a doctrine of revelation. They quote no declaration, or passage of Scripture, in which they profess to find this doctrine expressed or implied. It is confessedly an hypothesis, which they have assumed, as the only

* John xiv. 28.

† John v. 30.

‡ John xiv. 10.

§ John viii. 42.

|| John iv. 34.

¶ Mark xiii. 32.

** John iii. 16.

†† Matt. xix. 17.

†† John xx. 17.

mode in which they can reconcile Christ's supreme divinity with his own reiterated assertions to the contrary.

But this hypothesis of the two natures is far from obviating the difficulty, which it was designed to remove. If Christ be the supreme God, and if it be of any importance for mankind to know the fact, it was of equal importance for him to have made the fact known, nor can there have been any adequate reason for his concealing it. Moreover, those, who maintain the doctrine of two natures, virtually charge our Saviour with equivocation. For does not the word *I* include the whole of the person speaking? I myself am composed of body and mind. I know that *five and five are ten*. My body does not know it; but my mind knows it. Now suppose that I should say, "I do not know how much *five and five* are," and should afterwards explain myself by saying, "My body does not know it, and, when I spoke, I had reference to my body," what would you think of my honesty, or good sense? You would certainly infer that I had made utter shipwreck of one or the other. Or suppose that I should say, "I am unable to lift this manuscript," and when you looked to see if I were smitten with a sudden paralysis, I should add, "I only mean that my mind cannot lift it,—my body can," you would surely regard my speech as any thing but wise, and my intellect as any thing but sane. Yet such is the imputation, which the doctrine of the two natures casts upon our Saviour; and his exalted mission, and the momentous subjects on which he spoke, only render the imputation the more gross and unworthy. If our Saviour was the supreme God, he knew the day and hour, which he said that he did not know,—he had himself the power to perform those works, which he said that he could not perform of himself,—he was the equal of the Father, whom he called greater than himself; and there remains

no way, in which you can interpret these essentially false declarations from his lips, without casting reproach upon him, in whose pure and transparent spirit I believe that there was no guile. I press this point the more urgently, because to my eye the doctrine of our Saviour's supreme divinity renders all his recorded discourses a tissue of prevarication, fitted only to bewilder and mislead his hearers.

The hypothesis of the two natures also fails, inasmuch as Christ expressly disclaims the peculiar attributes of deity in some of those relations and offices, which it is contended that he fills by virtue of his divine nature. I know not how often I have seen and heard the number, variety, and magnitude of his miracles, and his sovereign sway over diseases and the elements, cited as demonstrative proof of his supreme divinity. But it is of these very miracles that he says: "The works that I do bear witness of me, that *the Father hath sent me.*"* It is often said, also, that none but God can be the final judge of man; and Christ's designated office as judge of the living and the dead is referred to in every defence of the Trinity, as proof positive of his supreme divinity. But of this office he says: "*The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son;*" and, a few sentences afterward, assigns not his deity, nor even his close connection with the Father, but, on the other hand, his relationship to man, as the reason why he is appointed man's judge: "*He hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.*"†

We have then our Saviour's uniform and often repeated testimony to his own created existence and subordinate rank, in maintaining which we cannot surely be guilty of denying the Lord Jesus, inasmuch as we fasten our faith upon his own words.

* John v. 36.

† John v. 22, 27.

Do we look to the rest of the New Testament? We still find our Saviour spoken of as a created and subordinate being. "Him hath God ordained,"— "Him hath God raised up,"— "Him hath God set forth,"— is the burden of the apostolic preaching. How many times do the apostles designate the Almighty as the *God*, or the *Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!* Says St. Paul: "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."* And again: "Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."† Says St. John: "God loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins;" and again, in the same chapter: "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world."‡ The apostles speak also of Christ, in his glorified state, as making intercession for his Church. "Who also maketh intercession for us."§ "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."|| If Christ be God, to whom does he pray?

The apostles speak of Christ as subordinate to the Father, even in those passages, in which they ascribe to him the highest exaltation and glory; nay, in the very passages, which are currently quoted in proof of his supreme divinity, on the alleged ground that such honor can be rendered to no created being. Take this passage for instance: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."¶ *God hath exalted him,— God hath given him a name,— to the glory of God the Father.*

* 1 Tim. ii. 5.

† 1 Cor. iii. 23.

‡ 1 John iv. 10, 14.

§ Rom. viii. 34.

|| 1 John ii. 1.

¶ Phil. ii. 9, 11.

How could his derived and subordinate nature have been more strongly expressed?

There is a passage in one of St. Paul's epistles to the Corinthians, where the extent and universality of Christ's reign are spoken of in more ample and lofty terms than anywhere else in the New Testament; but, as if to preclude the inference of his independent and supreme divinity, the apostle adds: "When all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."*

I might also quote that passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where God is represented as saying to Christ, in language borrowed from the Old Testament (in which a more free use is made of the word *God*, than in the New), "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever;" but it is added, "God, even *thy God*, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows,"†—a passage, which suggests the inquiry,—If Christ was the supreme God, who was his God, who were his fellows, and who anointed him? And throughout the introduction of this epistle, in which it seems the writer's sole object to heap the praises of a pious and grateful heart upon the glorified Redeemer, we have multiplied recognitions of his subordinate rank with reference to the Father. "Whom he *hath appointed* heir of all things, *by whom* also he made the worlds."‡ "It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, *to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings*; for both he that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, *are all of one*: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them *brethren*; saying, I will declare thy name

* 1 Cor. xv. 24-28.

† Heb. i. 8, 9.

‡ Heb. i. 2.

*unto my brethren : in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. . . . In all things it behooved him to be like unto his brethren. . . . In that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.”**

Now all these things may be said of the most highly exalted of God’s children ; but surely not of God himself. Men are not God’s brethren. God cannot sing praise to himself. God cannot be tempted ; nor can he have been made perfect through sufferings.

In the Epistle to the Colossians, where it is said of Christ, that “by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth,” and that “he is before all things,” he is in the same sentence styled, not the Un-created, but “the first-born of every creature,” therefore not self-existent, and consequently not God.†

In the Apocalypse, where the highest titles and honors are given to our Saviour, and where the rapt apostle sees the ransomed hosts casting down their crowns before him, he is still represented as a created being. Though he styles himself “Alpha and Omega, the first and the last,” ‡ he still indicates that these expressions denote not the un-created source of being, but the first-born Son ; for he afterward calls himself “*the beginning of the creation of God.*” § And again, while the redeemed are represented as assigning for the reason of their praise to the Father : “Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created ;” || to the Son their words are : “Thou *wast slain*, and hast redeemed us *unto God* by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and

* Heb. ii. 10-18.

† Col. i. 15-17.

‡ Rev. i. 11.

§ Rev. iii. 14.

|| Rev. iv. 11.

nation, and hast made us *unto our God* kings and priests,"* — an ascription, of which every candid mind must see at once that the supreme God cannot be the subject.

I next remark, that Christ did not present himself as an object of adoration, and that he commanded his disciples to offer prayer, not to himself, but to his Father. I know not what could be more explicit than the following passage, where, speaking of the time when he should no longer be with his disciples, he says to them: "In that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you."†

In accordance with these words of their Master, all the recorded prayers of the apostles are directed to God, generally through Christ, or in his name; nor do they, in a single instance, exhort their converts to pray or to give thanks to Jesus, but to God the Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The only case, I believe, in which authority for prayer to Christ is drawn from the New Testament, is that of the dying Stephen, when he said. "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."‡ But this was not prayer. This was not an address to an invisible being. It was speaking to one whom he saw. The heavens were opened, and he saw "Jesus standing on the right hand of God." He had a vision of the risen Saviour, with a countenance and gesture of welcome for his dying servant. He thus commended his spirit to one who had personally appeared, to lead him through the dark valley to the mansion of eternal rest.

One word more concerning this text. In our common Bible, it reads: "They stoned Stephen, calling upon *God*, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." But you will

* Rev. v. 9, 10.

† John xvi. 28.

‡ Acts vii. 59.

see that the word *God* is printed in italics. In this type are printed those words in the translation, which have no corresponding words in the original, but which the translators saw fit to supply. There are many, I suppose, who do not know what the italics in the Bible mean; and the explanation of them ought to be printed in every copy. This text, omitting the word inserted by the translators, would read: "They stoned Stephen, calling upon, or invoking, [of course the person last named, and that is Jesus,] and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." There is another instance, in which our translators have inserted the same word *God*. It is this: "Hereby perceive we the love of *God*, because he laid down his life for us."* The words *of God*, are in italics, and have nothing corresponding to them in the original, which, literally rendered, reads: "Hereby perceive we love, because he laid down his life for us."

But, to return from this digression, there is not, in the New Testament a single instance of prayer to Jesus, nor is there a single case, in which homage is paid to him in the way in which it is paid to God. There are indeed many ascriptions of praise to him; but they are always accompanied with the specific designation of his work and office as Mediator, and generally with an express reference to the eternal Father as alone supreme. But there are several instances, in which persons are said to have *worshipped* Jesus. The word translated *worship*, however, does not necessarily denote the rendering of divine honors, but simply prostration, or other external marks of homage or reverence, such as are paid by inferiors to superiors, by subjects to princes, and by servants to masters. For instance, the servant in the parable, who owed a thousand

* 1 John iii. 16.

talents, fell down at his master's feet, "and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all."* Indeed, most of these cases of *worship* or prostration before our Saviour were cases of suppliants asking favors of him, at a time when, it is generally contended by Trinitarians, our Saviour's supreme divinity had not yet been made known.

Such is the state of facts with reference to the recognition of our Saviour's supreme divinity by the apostles, in appropriate acts of devotion. Now, that neither prayer nor divine honors should have been rendered to our Saviour by his apostles seems to me entirely unaccountable, if he were properly the subject of them. It is equally unaccountable, that, if they had been rendered, no instance of the kind should have remained on record in the New Testament. And still more strange is it, that, if Jesus be the supreme God, he himself should not only have omitted to enjoin, but should have expressly forbidden prayer to himself, and should have prescribed a mode of prayer, in which he was indeed to be recognized as the Mediator, but not as the object of prayer.

I will now ask your attention to some of the single texts urged by those who maintain the supreme deity of Christ. I do not intend (for I have not time) to bring forward all the proof-texts that have been urged or relied upon. But I shall choose those, which seem to me the strongest, and those on which eminent Trinitarians have laid the most stress. I shall purposely omit only those, on which no independent reliance is placed, but which are brought forward as subsidiary to the argument based upon the others. And let me add, that, should I omit in this lecture the consideration of texts, which any of you desire to hear dis-

* Matthew xviii. 26.

cussed, if you will name such texts to me, they shall be taken up in the next lecture.

Those, who maintain the supreme divinity of our Saviour, rest for this doctrine, if I am not mistaken, solely on single texts. They draw no argument from the general tone and spirit of the New Testament. They admit that the argument from this source, so far as it has any bearing, goes against them. But they deem it overborne by the clearness and weight of the single texts, which they quote in behalf of their dogma.

Of these texts, I set aside, as having no bearing on the doctrine in question, those, which simply teach our Saviour's continued presence with his Church, and his power over the spiritual creation of God; for these are truths of which I entertain not the slightest doubt; they imply no more than a headship over the Church, conferred by the Father, and are but the fulfilment of those words of our Saviour: "All power *is given* unto me in heaven and in earth."* *Is given*, — given then by the Being, to whom it of right belonged, and who is as competent to constitute the ascended Redeemer head of the whole spiritual family above and below, as to make you and me fathers and heads of our own little households. Nor need we here consider those texts which imply, or seem to imply, our Saviour's pre-existence; for the question, whether he existed before his birth in Bethlehem, is entirely independent of that of his supreme divinity.

The only text from the Old Testament, much relied on by the advocates of the doctrine in question, is this from Isaiah: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son *is given*: and the government shall be upon his shoulder:

* Matthew xxvii. 18.

and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, *the mighty God*, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”* In this text, the Hebrew word rendered *God*, is not *Elohim*, the word commonly so rendered; but *El*, of which *God* is only a secondary meaning. The Hebrew Lexicons give for its meaning, *first* (as an adjective), *strong, mighty*; *secondly* (as an abstract noun), *strength, power*; and *thirdly* and often (by a natural transfer from an abstract to a concrete sense), *God*. Our translators chose the *last* of the *three* meanings. I am disposed to think the *first* the true signification here, and should render the passage: “He shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Strong, Mighty, Father of eternity, that is, Author of eternal life [or, perhaps, Father or Author of an age,—a new age or dispensation], Prince of Peace.”

Another text much relied on is from the Epistle to the Philippians: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, *thought it not robbery to be equal with God*; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant.”† The true sense of this passage, according to many *Trinitarian* commentators, is this: “Let the same mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, though in the form, the image of God, yet *did not covet to appear as God*, that is, did not exalt or magnify himself; but, on the other hand, humbled himself; and took upon him the form of a servant.” But, however this passage may be interpreted, any possible inference from it in favor of the supreme divinity of Christ is negatived by the sequel of the sentence, in which the apostle says that, on account of his thus humbling himself, “*God has highly exalted him, and has given him a name above every name*, that at the

* *Isaiah ix. 6.*

† *Philippians ii. 5-7.*

name of Jesus every knee should bow, . . . *to the glory of God the Father.*"

Another important text is this from the Epistle to the Romans: "Whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, *God blessed for ever. Amen.*"* The New Testament, like all books of that age, was originally written without stops, and without division of sentences. The stops have been inserted, and the sentences divided in comparatively recent times. I suppose, in common with many very eminent biblical critics, that, in this passage, there should be a full stop after the words, *over all*; and that the words, "*God blessed for ever, — Amen,*" were added as a doxology by the apostle, in the way, in which, in several instances, he has inserted a doxology in the midst of a paragraph.

The exclamation of Thomas, when he recognized his risen Master, "*My Lord and my God,*" † is quoted as a proof-text for the doctrine under discussion, though I am surprised that it should be. It was a mere exclamation of glad astonishment on the part of Thomas. It was not addressed to Christ; for it is not in the vocative case, which is used in the Greek when a person is spoken to. The words *Lord* and *God* are both in the nominative case. The sentence is elliptical; and, were we to supply the ellipsis, it would, as I suppose, read thus: "It is my Lord and my God, that has brought this glorious event to pass." But it was an abrupt, fragmentary exclamation, such as would naturally spring from overwhelming surprise, — not profane, because uttered in deep solemnity and awe, and in clear recognition of the divine hand, which had raised his Master from the dead. It was the most natural of all exclamations under the circumstances in which it was uttered.

• Romans ix. 5.

† John xx. 28.

Suppose that some one, whom we knew to have been long dead, should stand forth here in the presence of us all, would not the exclamation, *My God*, be the solemn, fervent, heart-stricken utterance of every one present? That any argument should ever have been based upon this exclamation seems to me excessively strange, when I consider the whole connection in which it stands. Thomas had, a moment before, expressed his entire unbelief as to the identity of his Master. Jesus then showed him his wounds, to convince him of his identity. This was all that he undertook to prove to Thomas, and all that the wounds could prove. Now, if Thomas had ever believed Christ to be God, he would never have doubted his power to rise from the dead. His scepticism with regard to the resurrection proves that he had not previously believed that Christ was God. But Christ's resurrection no more proved him to be God, than the rising of Lazarus proved him to be God. Thomas had therefore had no proof of his Master's supreme divinity presented to his mind; and one, so slow to believe as he was, could hardly have leaped to so momentous a conclusion, without something on which to base it.

The next passage, to which I shall refer, is this from the first Epistle to Timothy: "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: *God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received into glory.*"* There is much discrepancy with regard to the reading of this passage among the early manuscripts and versions; but, to my mind, the balance of argument is in favor of the common reading, and the text conveys to my apprehension nothing, which I do not gladly believe and embrace. Nay, I would adopt the passage as embodying my confession of

* 1 Timothy iii. 16.

faith with regard to Jesus Christ. I joyfully and thankfully acknowledge, that, in the person, in the moral attributes, in the unquenchable love of Jesus, God *was manifest in the flesh*,— that he was *justified*, that is, had false notions and sentiments concerning himself uprooted, and true ideas and feelings implanted among men, *through the workings of his spirit*,— that *angels beheld* with adoration this display of divine wisdom and love,— that God thus manifested was *proclaimed to the Gentiles*,— *believed on in the world*,— *received in glory*, (for such is the literal rendering of the words,) that is, gloriously received and welcomed in the hearts of Christ's true disciples.

In the Acts of the Apostles, St. Paul bids the Ephesian elders to “feed the church *of God*, which he hath purchased *with his own blood*.”* *Lord* occurs here instead of *God* in many of the earlier manuscripts and versions, and is deemed the true reading by the best critics. But I will take the text as it stands, and will seek no advantage from the difference of reading. Now, were it the general voice of the New Testament that the supreme God suffered, and died, and shed his blood upon the cross, I should certainly interpret this text as referring to his death. But, the contrary being the voice of the New Testament, if I admit the common reading of this passage, I must interpret it in accordance with what I know St. Paul to have believed and taught. Now St. Paul uniformly taught that “God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all;” and I must, therefore, suppose *blood*, in the passage under discussion, to denote *Son*, as it does, in common with the word *flesh*, in all languages, both ancient and modern. “He hath purchased with his own *blood*,” that is, with his own *Son*.

I now ask your attention, for a few moments, to the introduction of St. John's Gospel. In order to understand this, we must look at the purpose for which St. John wrote his Gospel. On this subject, we are fortunate in having, among others, a competent and unimpeachable witness in Irenæus,— a friend and pupil of Polycarp, who was a personal friend of St. John. It is the uniform testimony of antiquity, that St. John wrote his Gospel after the other three, and at Ephesus,— the head-quarters of the Gnostic heresy, which was the first wide departure from the simplicity of the Christian faith; and Irenæus says, that the beloved disciple wrote his Gospel for the express purpose of refuting the false and absurd notions, which the Gnostics were beginning to spread in Asia Minor. It concerns us then to know what the Gnostics believed. They engrafted upon the Christian faith a hybrid philosophy, or to speak more correctly, they engrafted some few Christian phrases and ideas upon a hybrid philosophy, in which Platonism was blended with the Oriental mysticism. They maintained that the supreme God dwelt in the remote heavens, surrounded by chosen spirits, *Æons* (as they called them), and gave himself very little concern with what took place upon earth; that the world was created by an inferior and imperfect being, who was also the author of the Jewish dispensation; that Christ was sent by the supreme God to deliver men from the tyranny of this creator, and from the yoke of his law; that there were also various created spirits, or *Æons*, sustaining different offices, independently for the most part of the supreme Deity, the names of some of which *Æons* were *Life*, *Light*, and, particularly, the *Logos* or *Word*, which represented the divine *Reason* or *Wisdom*; and that the *Æon Light* became incarnate in John the Baptist. All these spiritual existences were represented as distinct from one

another, and from the supreme God, so that the system was a sublimated form of polytheism. To fuse these disjointed fragments of deity into one,— to rebuke these babblings of philosophy, falsely so called, about a divided sceptre and a scattered divinity,— this was the purpose of St. John's introduction. And not only so; but we find that the same pervading purpose gives shape, and character, and, as it were, the key-note, to his whole Gospel. With this object in view, it was incumbent on him to show that *Life*, and *Light*, and the *Logos* or *Word*, were not distinct from the supreme God; that the supreme God created the world, and gave the Jewish law; that the same God sent John, the forerunner; and that the same God sent Jesus Christ, not to destroy, but to complete the law,— not to deliver men from its tyranny, but to finish for them the work, which the law had begun. And this is shown in the first eighteen verses of the gospel,— how comprehensively and beautifully you will see, if you keep in mind what I have told you of the Gnostic notion, while I read the passage to you, with such explanations that may be requisite.

In the beginning was the Word, the Logos, the divine Reason or Wisdom,— not a created being, nor yet an emanation from the Supreme; but it always existed,— *the Word was with God*, and never had a separate existence; *and the Word was God*, was and is inseparable from his essence and his attributes. *The same Word*, the same divine Wisdom, repeats the evangelist, *was in the beginning with God*. And now St. John directs his attention to another of the Gnostic errors, namely, that of the world's having been created by an inferior divinity. *All things*, says St. John, *were made by him*, that is, by God (not by the Word,— *him* refers to *God*, which is the nearest preceding noun to which it can refer). All things were

made by the supreme God, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him also was Life; and the Life was the Light of men. Life and Light are not distinct essences; but God is the source of life, and, where it flows from him, light flows with it. And the Light shines in darkness; but the darkness comprehended it not. God has shed light upon men in the darkest times, though men have chosen darkness rather than light.

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came for a witness, to bear testimony of the light, concerning the divine light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that light, not himself an Æon, a spiritual emanation,— he was a man, like other men; but was sent to bear witness of the Light. He, from whom he came, God, was the true Light that enlightens every man that comes into the world. God had not removed himself from his creation, had not dwelt apart in the remote heavens. He was already, he was always in the world, and the world had been made by him; yet the world knew him not. He had come to his own, to the Jewish nation, his favored and covenant people; but his own received him not; that is, as a nation, they had in general disowned and rejected him in heart and deed, though not in name. But to as many as received him, to the patriarchs and to the faithful among their posterity, to them who believed on his name, he gave power to become the sons of God, his own spiritual children, born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man (children not in any human or earthly sense), but of God.

And, in these latter days, the Word, the divine Wisdom, became flesh, and dwelt among men; and we, I and my fellow-apostles, beheld its glory,— the glory of the only begotten, of the chosen Son, of the Father, full of mercy and of truth.

John bore testimony concerning him, and cried, saying, This is he, of whom I said, He that cometh after me, has taken precedence of me ; for he was before me, — was my superior. And of his fulness, of the rich truth and mercy of the Word made flesh, have we all received ; yet not, as false teachers now say, mercy instead of wrath, a silken instead of an iron yoke, but grace for gruce, — one gracious dispensation to supersede another. For the law was given through Moses, and that was a law of mercy, adapted to its own times ; but now mercy and truth for all times have come through Jesus Christ. No man has seen God at any time ; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him, has made him known.

Thus we see that the introduction of John's gospel, so far from authorizing the breaking up of the divine nature into a plurality of persons, is a noble assertion and vindication of the divine unity, well worthy the pen of inspiration, — a passage, in which, as with a prophet's wand, he waves back to their native nothingness the chimeras of an arrogant and impious philosophy.

But I have spoken long enough, perhaps too long. I have shown you, as I trust, that the general tenor of the New Testament, and numberless express declarations of our Saviour and his apostles, oblige us to regard him, though second only to the Father, as holding with reference to the Father a derived existence, and a subordinate rank. I have heaped up an amount of testimony, which much more than convinces me, — which leaves my own mind, I can truly say, without the shadow of a doubt, — with a conviction, which has no room to grow stronger. I have also, I think, selected all the really strong and difficult texts alleged in proof of the opposite doctrine. Some of them, I confess, would have weight, were they not overborne by such an overwhelming amount of testi-

mony on the other side. But not one of them requires, and some of them do not in my view admit, the interpretation, which favors the supreme divinity of Christ.

I now commend the subject to your own serious reflection and study. But, while you seek and prize just ideas of your Saviour's rank and character, remember that your truest knowledge of him, is heart-knowledge,— that knowledge, which you can have only by being like him,— by following him,— by having “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”

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ORTHODOXY

AND

LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY.

Compared and Contrasted.

BY

REV. HENRY W. BELLOWS, D.D.

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

BOSTON.

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ORTHODOXY AND LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY

COMPARED AND CONTRASTED.

BY HENRY W. BELLOWS.

I PROPOSE in these few pages briefly to sketch the opposition of opinion on the main points between Unitarians and the so-called Orthodox sects, taking these sects together in a large way as being agreed in what is commonly considered the creed of Christendom.

Of course, my sketch will be rapid, superficial, and imperfect; but I mean it to be candid, plain, and as nearly true as my own prejudices will permit it to be. I must use a directness not common, perhaps, in these days; but I hope it will be a godly simplicity, and to many I must seem very commonplace.

Orthodoxy, then, represents God characteristically as a sovereign bound by certain stern laws imposed by his own holiness, which brought him, from the existence of the first human being, into a terrible conflict with the human race, who by the sin of Adam became enemies of God, and doomed to eternal ruin. Out of this ruin man was snatched, so far as he accepts the conditions of faith in Christ, by the interposition of a second person in an assumed Trinity,—the Son of God,—a being uncreated and eternal, equal with God, who offered himself in place

of guilty man ; took flesh, and came into the world ; delivered the message of mercy, and died to expiate with his blood the guilt of the race. Human salvation thus made possible, man appropriates its fruits by faith in the terms of it, which is called receiving the benefits of the atonement ; while those who reject these terms, either from no being able or willing to receive them, or because they never hear of them, — like the heathen, — fall under the original curse, and go to the everlasting burnings of the bottomless pit.

Unitarians discard this whole scheme as in their judgment a mythical, fabulous, irrational, incredible system, descended from ignorant and credulous times, and not justified by Christ's words or spirit. They regard God as characteristically a Father rather than a Sovereign, and think his chosen name of Love makes any original curse of the human race an impossible fable. They reject the doctrine of the Trinity, invented by theologians in the second century, as a cumbrous, scholastic scheme, lacking coherency and even intelligibility ; and give Christ the position he claims as the Son of God, created and subordinate, — God's representative, messenger, and plenipotentiary, — who shall one day give up his power as the Head of the Church to his Father, "that God may be all in all." With Unitarians the atonement is simply the at-one-ment, or bringing together of man with God, — the reconciliation of the child, alienated from his Father by sin and ignorance, with his ever-loving Parent, — an opinion in direct contrast with that dogma known as the vicarious atonement, and esteemed the most tender and precious doctrine of the Orthodox Church ; which represents God as being himself the party to be reconciled ; as having been since Adam's fall in infinite anger with his children, and propitiated by the death of his innocent Son towards the

penitent and converted, but still angry and wrathful with the impenitent and the unconverted, who always form the vast majority of his creatures.

Unitarians do not believe the Orthodox dogma of an original fall, changing the moral nature of man. They believe man originally and still created upright, innocent; and capable of virtue and holiness, subject, of course, to hereditary influences, both good and bad; feeble only through ignorance and exposure, and often perverted by his want of training and the evil example around him.

And this view they hold in opposition to the doctrine of native, inborn, universal depravity, derived, with the curse that accompanied it, from Adam's fall. Regeneration with them is the orderly and normal awakening of the spiritual nature from its sleep in the purely animal or merely instinctive nature, as opposed to the notion of a miraculous change in the moral constitution of the soul. The Holy Spirit is for them the recognized influence of God's ever-loving and sanctifying breath, always blowing, but not filling our spiritual lungs, until we expand them voluntarily to receive it; in opposition to the doctrine of a third person in the Trinity, whose influence is to be invited by doctrinal convictions and professions, and whose presence is occasional, exceptional, and peculiar. The Bible they reverence as a most wonderful and sacred book, containing, in the Old Testament, the general literature, sacred, historical, and poetic, of the Jewish people; written in large part by wholly unknown authors, and under the ordinary lights of human knowledge, and with all the ordinary subjection to human errors; with exalted passages from minds lifted far above their time and filled with truth and holiness, that will last as long as the world stands; but yet a book to be read without superstitious literality, and with a free and rational, yet reverential and

devout, discrimination. Of the New Testament they speak as the record of a revelation, made by ear and eye witnesses, by men religiously inspired, yet not free from the prejudices, and theoretical and even practical errors of their times ; and therefore not binding upon us in the servile way of an acceptance of its statements after a purely grammatical examination of the meaning of the text. It is not merely a grammar and lexicon, but a human soul in the largest and greatest use of its faculties, which can interpret the New Testament. The Bible is not the mechanical work of the Holy Spirit, employing patriarchs, prophets, and apostles to write its communications out, as mediums in a nervous frenzy pretend to write out the messages of invisible spirits ; but the record of what holy men thought and said as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, which is not a mere dictator, but an *influence*, operating not independently, but through the agency, of human thoughts and feeling, and of course allying itself often with what is temporary, partial, and even mistaken ; just as the pure evening breeze from the sea, bringing health far into the interior to the parched and wilted invalid melted by the summer heats, brings, nevertheless, odors of the land over which it passes,—and perhaps not always fragrant ones,—mixed with its saline breath. Unitarian Christians entertain different theoretical views of the connection between this world and the other, from so-called Orthodox Christians. *They* call the world a physical ruin, all its courses disjointed in the original twist given to it by the introduction of sin, which cursed the ground. They consider life as a vale of tears, a fallen world, a necessarily sad and wretched experience ; a period of probation for an existence which will not fairly begin till we are dead and risen again on the other side of Time, and which will begin only in eternal misery and ruin.

for all who are not here converted to a special view of Christ's sacrifice, and do not accept his atonement in a technical and saving sense.

In this terrible exposure, with what decency can human beings, surrounded by millions of dying souls in peril of everlasting ruin, give any legitimate attention to their own immediate interests or pleasures, spend any time in leisure or enjoyment, indulge any self-gratifications or private tastes, or do any thing which does not have reference to the salvation of souls? On the contrary, Unitarian Christians regard life, eternal life, as beginning when the soul begins, and as independent of time and place. They consider this world as being God's residence as much as any other; that happiness is as legitimate here as in heaven; that life is not wholly for *some ulterior* end, but is partly its own end, and that every part of it is an end in itself; that God lives to make his children happy now and always; that our education is going on now, and will always be going on; that we learn, by care and by freedom from care, by what is serious and by what is gay, that God is interested in our business, our pleasures, our cares, our affections, our tasks, our virtues, our piety; and that ascetic, terrifying, and exclusive views of life and futurity—views which interdict a large part of human nature and ostracize all but a special set of faculties,—deform and dwarf the soul, and bring in, sooner or later, a fearful re-action, which makes religion hated and God defied. Unitarians believe that these views make the roundest, soundest characters,—characters in which the moral graces and charities are most honestly and substantially developed; characters that show their worth in business, in the home-circle, and in all the various spheres of public and private usefulness. They are afraid of severe or superstitious or ecclesiastical views of piety, as making self-deceived, sentimental, and often hypocritical

characters. They do not fancy people who think a special class is set apart for the covenanted mercies of the Almighty God; that only the favored few, elected by grace, are sprinkled with saving blood; that heaven is a narrow garden, fenced in with flaming swords, where, according to some learned doctors, the blessed have their joys augmented by contemplating from afar the smoke of the torments of the lost millions that fill the ever-opening jaws of all-devouring hell.

Those who imagine that mild views of God's character and purposes, or wide and charitable hopes for the human race, or tender and encouraging sympathies towards our great, struggling brotherhood, or belief in human progress and in the ultimate redemption of men, tend to moral license, encourage vice, soften the energies of the will, or dull the edge of the conscience, can know little of the history of crime, of the experiences of penal law, of the principles of human nature. All great philanthropists and explorers of the means of suppressing vice and crime unite in recommending generous laws,—mild punishments,—mild, but sure, and as swift in their application as may be; with a still greater reliance, however, in the saving of the vicious, on encouragements and inducements to virtue, than on fear of punishment. One common school does more to reduce a noisy, vicious neighborhood to order than a dozen policemen! One gentle, tender-hearted visitor to a jail will sometimes soften and shape the hearts of the obdurate, who have long defied punishment and threats. The world can never be scared out of its sins. Even brutes are now broken to the rein by kindness, and not by red-hot bars of iron and bits of jagged steel; and the human soul defies scornfully those who come in the name of God to invite it to heaven by the fears of an eternal and flaming hell! Who is this Calvinistic God, that any of us should love him, who hates

so many of our feeble race? Who is this God who is to make us worship him for his goodness, while millions like ourselves are writhing in the tortures of his unrelenting hand? No Andersonville prison, with its Wirtzes and Winders, summoning the world to curse its systematic cruelties, deserves one iota of the loathing and hatred with which the united race should repel the idea of a pre-destined ruin in a flaming pit for endless ages,— the penalty of helpless ignorance and an hereditary depravity, and visited on those who sit in heathen darkness just as remorselessly as upon those who reject the clearest light of the gospel.

Unitarians reject and repel this abortive conception of an ignorant and violent age, as blasphemous to God, and dishonoring to Christ, and depraving to humanity. They denounce it as a cruel rendering into prosaic fact of certain pictorial phrases, fitted, perhaps, to move a rude people nineteen centuries ago; but unworthy to be handed down, stereotyped into doctrine, taught with awful shows of so-called inspired texts, and fastened upon the conscience and the fears of the timid with nails driven by masters of assemblies. They assert, that such terrible conceptions are not necessary either to arrest attention, to arouse the conscience, or to win the soul to the invitation of Christ. They have tried another way, and are satisfied with it. They believe the age of fearful doses and purgings and bleedings and scarifications and starving and stifling — in the name of the healing art — has gone by that food, carefully chosen, is taking the place of medicine while exercise, and air, and moderation, and cheerful society, and honest and various occupation and innocent amusement are better prescriptions, and commoner ones from modern medical skill, than any which are carried in ad Latin to the apothecary's, and brought back in nauseous

drugs and poisons. And so they solemnly and deliberately, with the fear of God before their eyes, choose to present God exclusively as Infinite Love, and never as Eternal Wrath,— Infinite Love, not hampered and hindered by its own attributes, so that it cannot manifest itself practically; but with a godlike and sovereign freedom to act as lovingly as its celestial spirit prompts. This love was not exhibited in the merciful Jesus in contrast with his Father's awful justice, but shown by him as the express image of God's eternal love; so that the mercy of Christ is the mercy of God, and there is no divine justice which is not heavenly mercy too.

My brethren, it takes courage to join a little body of Christians that entertain notions so opposed to the current creed of Christendom: it requires an intellectual, a moral, a spiritual independence, which all do not possess. But are not views so precious, inspiring, all-reconciling as these worth contending for, worth suffering for, worth dying for, were we living in a persecuting age? At an era when, instead of scornful words and denunciations, the fagot and the axe punished such gentle heresies as ours, Biddle, one of the earliest of English Unitarians, was in danger of the stake for views like these. Now we are merely scorched in the imaginations of our Christian opponents, — a penalty which it is not very hard to bear.

I know nothing more important to the interests of the Christian world and the cause of virtue, purity, truth, and piety, than that it should be everywhere known that there are people of intelligence, benevolence, rectitude, and reverence who entertain these liberal and rational views; who have ceased to associate faith with superstition, or stability of Christian belief with deafness and blindness to the fresh testimonies of science and experience; or love of God with contempt for the visible creation, our pres-

ent sphere; or hope of immortality with a systematic depreciation of our immediate existence. I firmly believe that a Liberal Christian, consistently conscientious and devout, after our generous pattern,— who is seen to be no self-seeker, no worldling; known as an enemy of vice, folly, and selfishness; an upright, pure, benevolent, and spiritually-minded person,— has an influence in these times in the way of upholding the gospel and putting down practical atheism, and that worst infidelity which consists in unfaithfulness to Christ's precepts and spirit, which no Orthodox Christian can exceed, and which few can equal. I devoutly believe, that, were it not for the testimony which Liberal Christians have offered against technical tests and dogmatic standards of character, the popular religion of this country would by degrees have taken on the form of Roman Catholic formalism, or Puritanical sourness and narrowness; leaving the intelligent classes in the state in which they were found in England at the close of the last century, with Hume and Gibbon sneering, in the name of science and culture, at a Christianity which produced such fruits: or as it is in France at this day, where religion, in any form, is regarded by the science and literature, the statesmanship and wealth and influence of the country, as a convenient means of governing the masses, but in itself a matter quite unworthy to interrupt the more engaging and valuable pursuits of people concerned with actual facts and practical questions and immediate pleasures! If Unitarians, as often complained, are not seen to be duly consecrated to Christian usefulness, to the devout imitation of Christ, to the building-up of God's kingdom in the world, it is not the fault of their system or of their opinions. But, mainly so far as it is a true criticism, it is due to the fact, that the self-consecration of the soul on these principles is a larger, higher, grander work than upon the cur-

rent theological grounds, and that few persons wholly worthy of their exalted standard appear. But is the criticism sound at bottom? It is true, that Unitarian Christians do not bear the ear-marks of the popular pietism, that they are not characterized by the use of the technical language of the sects about them, nor by the facial expression or special traditional manners of theological saints; but if those who trade with them, live with them, know them through and through, do not find them at least on a level with other Christians in their integrity, their moderation, their purity and truth, their mingled love and fear of God, their sincere and tender reverence for Christ's authority, example, and spirit, then let their pretensions be scorned and their claims to lead on the Church be derided! God knows we have reason enough to be humble, in view of our unfaithfulness to our own ideal. We ought, under the inspiration of principles like ours, to make the world ring with our exemplary Christian lives, and high and holy deeds and influences. A true and engaging piety ought to flow with prodigious power through our special channels. The earnest minds and hearts of the world, instead of expending energies in holding up the crumbling walls of Trinitarian and Calvinistic theology, or coopering the restless and unmatchable staves of a barrel that no longer holds securely the water of life, ought, with one consent, to turn to and endeavor to establish that Rational, Liberal Christianity which is as certainly prefigured by the shadows of coming events, and destined ultimately to be the creed of Christendom, as noon is to follow morning; and every timid man or woman, suppressing the soul's convictions, practising on grounds of policy and fashion a coldness towards our views they do not feel; averting the eyes, or affecting a horror or distrust for rational Christianity; going with the multitude and joining

the popular sects without believing their creeds,—is guilty of a treacherous meanness of spirit, is grieving the spirit of truth, is delaying the triumph of the gospel.

I know no class of persons in a more hopeless condition than Unitarians who will not avow their views and adjust their religious profession to their convictions, and join with those who agree with them in seeking to make popular and influential a new type of Christianity. There were plenty of these timid Christians in Christ's time, who died in the bondage of the Mosaic law, because they dared not be among the few to profess their faith in the "good news" he brought; plenty of Protestants in Luther's glorious day, who died in the Romish Church because they had not the courage to welcome and own the light that had really penetrated their minds. If the Liberal Christians in America could be known to each other,—could rise like one man at a given signal, and discover in what formidable numbers they exist, what a mass of intelligence, character, influence, and worth they carry,—they might achieve a momentous triumph in a twelvemonth.

Were our singularity and newness done away with,—our full force actually brought into view,—we should at once give over all controversy with Orthodoxy, and go to work in redeeming the world from moral ignorance and spiritual death. Let confidence in our views, let a sense of our real strength visit the Liberal-Christian mind, and it will claim the popular will and heart; it will place itself at the head of all reform, to soften and Christianize their spirit; it will accept science to interpret its religious meaning, philosophy to show its harmony with Christian truth, and teach the world how to blend the light of faith with reason, and the interests of time with those of eternity. A devout spirit in a thoroughly free mind; a faith in Christ, purchased at no loss of mental energy and freedom; love

of God and fellowship with the Saviour, freed from technical and formal conditions, and become as genuine and natural as with the early Christians,—what wondrous victories are not waiting for this potent spell, this wholly new and glorious union of things long falsely held incompatible? Oh! in a country that is always doing what is impossible; that can disprove the time-hallowed fallacies, that governments of the people are necessarily weak, that liberty is essentially anarchical, that breadth of territory is fatal to cohesion, that great armies cannot be disbanded without violence, and must always threaten the civil law,—in a great country like ours, must not, shall not Liberal Christianity be proved to be a possibility? Has not God made America for the triumph of this true Catholicism? this broad, luminous, rational, free, yet practical, binding, inspiring, spiritualizing faith? Let us believe so, and we shall make it so.

Let there be no mistake where our flag is. Recognizing the services of all Christian sects, and honoring them according to their faithfulness, knowing that they still have great and glorious works to do, and always ready and glad to praise and bless their various usefulness, I never can lose sight of our own special cause, nor undervalue its sacred and precious obligations. We stand, in every community where a church of our faith exists, for faith in the ever-living and ever-opening gospel,—a gospel which existed before any of the creeds that embody it, and will live long after they are all forgotten; a gospel which has no shackles for the body or for the mind; which is not afraid of the geologist's hammer or the astronomer's tube or the naturalist's microscope; which believes in man as God's inalienable child, and in Christ as God's free mercy, and in God as the Universal Father, against whose mighty and eternal love neither Adam's sins nor ours can stand

up as permanent barriers to its glorious, beneficent, and universal course; a gospel of common sense, of generous sympathies, of broad charity, of practical beneficence, which claims to come from Christ's lips, which hopes to fold the whole world in its gentle arms, and which is not afraid to trust itself, in life and in death, as the appointed way of salvation and the gate of eternal life!

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[No. 15

ORTHODOXY

AN

ENEMY OF CHRISTIANITY

BY REV. J. T. SUNDERLAND,

AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

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(As expressed by the *National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894*.)

“These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

“The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test ; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims.”

ORTHODOXY

AN ENEMY OF CHRISTIANITY

"After the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers." *Acts xxiv. 14.*

IT is always incumbent upon a people who persist in maintaining a different form of religious doctrine or worship from the majority of the people of the community or country in which they dwell, to be always ready, on fitting occasion, to give a reason.

I shall occupy the time before us this morning in stating, as briefly and plainly as I can, why I, for one, find myself compelled to take my stand outside of so-called orthodoxy, and to worship the God of my fathers in the way that the majority of the people of this country and Christendom call heresy.

I believe that nothing of more value than Christianity ever made its appearance among men.

But I believe that what is generally understood by Christianity to-day, whether in Protestant countries or Catholic, is not pure, original Christianity, as Jesus taught Christianity by lip and life, but that Christianity corrupted, and corrupted by the introduction of elements entirely foreign to it and essentially bad.

These bad elements do not, of course, more than to a limited extent, destroy the Christianity with which

they are mixed, but they are, nevertheless, so far as they themselves go, corrupting and harmful to it.

What *are* these bad and corrupting elements? Without hesitation, I answer, in my judgment, first of all, and worst of all, is that religious philosophy, or theology, or series of doctrines about God and man and religion, which wears the popular name of orthodoxy, and which includes in its list, among others, the doctrine of the fall of the race in Adam; the doctrine of universal total depravity; the doctrine of an endless hell; the doctrine of the Trinity; the doctrine of the coming down to earth of the sacred person of the Trinity, to die in man's place, and so satisfy God's justice; the doctrine that following Christ, or believing in Christ, or being saved by Christ, means in any sense accepting the idea that Jesus died to reconcile God to men, or to make God one whit more willing or ready to save men, that is, one whit more a Father than He always has been; and finally, not to mention any others, the doctrine of Jesus-worship, which is so popular in our time, as practically, in large measure, to crowd out worship of God.

I say of all the things that wound Christianity to-day and make it bleed; of all the things that corrupt and poison it, and tend to make it other than the sweet and healthful and divine thing which it was when Jesus gave it new to the world; of all the things which tend to make it an offence to the best thought and intelligence of the time, without hesitation I name, as in my judgment *first and worst*, the system of theology which includes these doctrines which I have mentioned, and which is known popularly as orthodoxy.

Do you ask *why* I thus judge orthodoxy to be the

worst foe which Christianity has to-day? I answer, in a general way, first, because of *where* it is, and second, because of *what* it is.

As to where it is, it is *inside* the church. If it were outside, it would be comparatively harmless, for it is always comparatively easy to defend against an outside enemy. But when an enemy gets inside the camp, as orthodoxy has done, then is the difficulty and the danger vastly increased.

Long ago, in darker ages, orthodoxy fought its way into the very heart of the Christian church, and there, by intolerance and proscription and every art, entrenched itself. And now, in our day of greater light, when men begin to discover that it is not Christianity, but an intruder and a foe, it is so strongly fortified in its position that it is only with the greatest difficulty that it can be stirred. Indeed, it has actually, to a very large extent, captured the Christian religion. And so to-day, wherever we go, we find orthodoxy preaching in the most unblushing manner that it is Christianity, and that every thing opposed to it is not Christianity. It is mainly because of this condition of things that that body of, on the whole, remarkably intelligent and sincere men, known as the Free Religionists, have taken their stand outside of the Christian name. So plainly do they see that the Christian name has been captured, and now stands identified in the minds of the mass of mankind with orthodoxy,—something which they believe to be false and degrading,—that they declare it to be hopeless to attempt to capture the name back again.

But, for one, while I feel the force of their reasoning, I cannot acquiesce in their conclusion. I don't think

it is hopeless to attempt to capture it back again. It will take a long, hard battle to do it, but all the better forces of our civilization are certainly rallying to our side to help us, and we shall, by and by, accomplish it. The transformations of history are very strange and often dark. But, amidst them all, this we know,—

“Truth crushed to earth shall rise again;
The eternal years of God are hers.”

And this, “Every plant that my heavenly Father hath not planted shall” (sooner or later) “be rooted up.”

But, furthermore, I believe orthodoxy to be the worst foe against which Christianity has to contend to-day, not only because it has got for itself an inside position, and claims that it alone is Christianity, but also because it is so thoroughly *anti-Christian in its nature*. Mark what I say, so that I shall not be misunderstood. I do not say that people who believe in orthodoxy are not Christian people. Many of them, so far as character and practical life are concerned, unquestionably *are* Christian people. However, their Christianity does in no sense lie in their orthodoxy. On the contrary, it is something incomparably higher, broader, sweeter, diviner, and altogether a different thing from their orthodoxy. Their Christianity would remain all the same if their orthodoxy should vanish; and, indeed, would only have found a more vigorous and worthy growth if it had never had the incubus of orthodoxy to weigh it down at all.

So that my position is, that, whereas orthodox people are, large numbers of them, undoubtedly truly Christian in character and life, notwithstanding their theology, yet orthodoxy as a theology, in all that which is peculiar to it as orthodoxy, is essentially and eternally

anti-Christian, and has always and everywhere hurt and not helped the cause of true religion on the earth.

But, to come down from the general to the specific, precisely in what respects is it anti-Christian? I reply, Chiefly in four respects:—

First. Orthodoxy is not taught by Christ, but, instead, contradicts many of His plainest teachings.

Second. It is unreasonable.

Third. It is essentially immoral.

Fourth. The time and manner of its usurpation of its place in the Christian church can be clearly traced in history.

1. The first specific charge, then, that I make against orthodoxy is, that it is not taught by Jesus, but, instead, is clearly in contradiction with many of His most prominent and oft-repeated teachings.

To begin with, Jesus nowhere gives any intimation that he knows any thing about any Trinity; he expressly calls his Father the only God; he usually calls himself the Son of Man; he never calls himself by any title which even hints that he is God; he declares outright that his Father is greater than he. And, as to his unity with the Father, he declares it to be of the same kind with his unity with his disciples, and with God's unity with all loving and obedient children, to wit, plainly, unity of spirit, of love, of aim, of desire.

Orthodoxy, on the contrary, declares that there are three Gods in one God (not simply a mysterious, but a self-contradictory statement), and that Jesus is the true God,—eternal, omnipotent, and the Creator of the world.

Again, Jesus teaches that the best and truest conception of God which we can get is that of a Father, who

always loved and always will love every human child of his, who for ever desires his children's best welfare, and neither has his heart steeled against them when they sin, so that he does not wish to save them, nor his hands tied by figments of law or justice, so that he cannot save them; but, instead, that he is a Father who waits all the day long for his erring children to come back to him, even as the father in the parable of the Prodigal Son waited,—ready, rejoiced, glad to forgive always; nor does he want anybody to die in their place either, *before* he forgives, any more than the father of the Prodigal wanted somebody to suffer death before he would forgive his repentant boy. Contrary to all this, however, orthodoxy teaches that God has always been angry with his human children when they have sinned, and either could not or would not (you may take which horn of the dilemma you choose) forgive them, no matter how deeply they repented, until an innocent person had died in their stead.

Again, Jesus taught that salvation is primarily and essentially salvation from sinning, that is, salvation into present holiness and consequent happiness. Orthodoxy, on the other hand, teaches that the great and all-important idea of salvation is escape from endless penal torment in the next world, and entrance into a far-away heaven, from which, certainly, a large part of those whom we love most will be shut out.

Again, Jesus taught that the kingdom of heaven comes not "with observation," but is "within you,"—a silent, hidden thing of the heart and conscience and character, beginning in the smallest germs of good planted in the mind, and growing and developing, silently and naturally, as the influence of leaven

spreads in meal, or as corn grows in the field,—first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.

Orthodoxy teaches, on the other hand,—is it too much to say so?—that the kingdom of heaven comes *with* observation, and lo! heres, and lo! theres, with crowds; with excitements of preaching and singing and exhortation; with loud professions; with conversions blazoned to the world; and all that kind of thing.

Again, Jesus taught that they who in the judgment-day should be accepted, and hear the welcome words, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world,” were not those who said, “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?” but those who *did the will* of the Father by feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, receiving the stranger, ministering to the wants of the poor and suffering of their brother human beings in the world. Orthodoxy, on the contrary, teaches that those who shall be accepted at the judgment are those who have *simply believed* that—

“Nothing, either great or small,
Remained for them to do;
Jesus died and paid it all,
Yes, all the debt they owe.”

Finally, to mention no other antagonisms between the two, Jesus taught that the only proper object of worship for human beings is God, the Father of all, even inditing a form of prayer, beginning, “Our Father who art in heaven,” and never giving any hint of encouragement or tolerance to any thing which even looked in the direction of worship of himself. Ortho-

doxy, however, that is to say, Protestant orthodoxy of the so-called evangelical type, which is so popular in England and America just now, and which we come into contact with more than any other, has reversed all this, and has erected Jesus into, not simply an object, but into the principal object of human worship. Virgin Mary worship is scarcely more conspicuous in Catholic countries than Jesus worship is getting to be in this country. Not only in preaching, but in hymns and prayers, God has fallen quite into the background, and Jesus has taken His place.

Other points of antagonism between orthodoxy and the teachings of Jesus, nearly or quite as important as these, remain, but I must pass them by. I have only time for a word or two of a general character.

Not long ago, in conversing with a brother minister regarding the Sermon on the Mount, he remarked that this sermon of Christ was very noticeable, and for several reasons. And, first of all, it was noticeable for what it did not say,—quite as noticeable for that as for what it did say,—for the truth could not be escaped. He urged that, in that most lengthy and complete of all Jesus' public discourses, in which he laid down the truths he had to offer men more fully than anywhere else, the great Teacher altogether omitted every thing which comes under the head of the doctrines of orthodoxy. He explained and set forth the Christianity which he had to offer to men, with all these left out. And, if we follow the teachings of Jesus right on from that time to the end, I do not know how any one can deny that we always find him setting forth a Christianity which has all these doctrines which are peculiar to orthodoxy *persistently* left out.

The Trinity, Adam's fall, total depravity, the "plan of redemption," and every other one, is conspicuously wanting. The only seeming exception is the doctrine of an eternal hell. But, even in this, the exception is rather seeming than real; for, in those cases where Jesus refers to punishment in the next world, and uses the words "everlasting" or "eternal" in connection with it, in every case the Greek *Aion* or *Aionos*, translated eternal or everlasting, is the same word which is used repeatedly in other places in the New Testament in connection with things which come to an end.

And, if the doctrines of orthodoxy are not supported, but, on the contrary, are nearly all of them plainly denied and combated by the teachings of Jesus, so also, I hold, that they are in like manner confuted, instead of established, by the *Bible as a whole*. I grant that there is more which seems to uphold these doctrines in other parts of the Bible than in the Gospels. And you notice that when any one comes before you, attempting to prove almost any doctrine of orthodoxy, as a rule, he goes for his main proofs, not to the great Teacher, but to some disciple, or some writer of the Old Testament, whose light was not so clear, and whose understanding of these things was not so perfect as that of Jesus. In other words, he takes you into the candle-light, and not into the sunlight. Why don't he take you into the sunlight of the Sermon on the Mount, and the fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth of John, and the Gospels generally, to see how these subjects appear there? If they are the great central doctrines of Christianity, as is claimed, certainly they will be found in the teachings of the Founder of Christianity. But, no; instead of taking you there, he takes you to the writings of men

who lived before Jesus, and had only the light of Judaism ; or else to the disciples, who were far below their Master, and who certainly, all through the ministry of Jesus, were for ever misunderstanding Him, even with regard to the plainest things of His teachings. And yet, I cannot admit that even their writings, fairly and truly interpreted, do really teach or give any real support to one of the distinctive doctrines of orthodoxy. And this is noticeable, that those writers of the Bible who are farthest advanced, and most near to the intellectual, moral, and spiritual level of Jesus, always give least of even seeming countenance to the doctrines of orthodoxy, and harmonize most fully and clearly with Jesus in teaching truths that antagonize orthodoxy at every point. But I have dwelt upon this part of my subject quite too long, though I should be glad, if time allowed, to push it much further still. I go forward now to my next point.

2. Orthodoxy is *irrational*. I charge it with being quite as antagonistic to reason as it is to the teachings of Christ. And this is something not to be regarded lightly. It disparages reason, and says reason is of the natural man, and to be held always in subordination to faith. The thing of most importance to be done, the thing most pleasing to Heaven, the thing without which there is no safety or salvation, is to believe, simply believe. And the explanation of the mystery, why the old theology is able to retain its hold upon the minds of the people as it does, lies, more than anywhere else, in just this fact, that it teaches that men must not doubt, must not question ; they must believe. To use their reason in connection with religion, beyond a certain very narrow limit, is of the devil.

I shall never forget my own long and bitter experience in this particular. After doubts and misgivings about different doctrines of the old theology began to arise in my mind and trouble me, I was kept on the rack of mental torture for months and years, by being told by every one whom I went to for light that my doubts were all temptations of the Evil One; I must pray against them; I must struggle against them; I must put them down; for the glorious doctrines of the true faith were doctrines to be reverently and implicitly believed, and not to be much reasoned about. The human reason was a depraved faculty. It had fallen with the fall of Adam, and so was to be distrusted.

Well, of course, a theology that has once obtained a hold upon the popular mind,—and this theology *got* its hold, we must remember, in ages darker than ours; it could not do it now,—but having once obtained a hold upon the popular mind, of course that hold would be very firm and hard to shake, because it guards so securely the *initial*,—checking its adherents the moment they *begin to doubt*, saying, You must not doubt, or question or reason, for all this is the very essence of sin.

And, of course, too, a theology which defends itself by forbidding or limiting inquiry, and by tabooing reason, must necessarily be an unreasonable theology. It declares itself to be devoid of reason in its very condemnation of reason. If it were itself rational, it would have no objection to being submitted to the tests of reason and inquiry. Things born of the light do not fear the light.

The most intelligent supporters of orthodoxy know only too well that every increase of light and intelli-

gence tends to show the weakness of their theology. That is the reason why that theology has fought science as it has.

Orthodoxy seems instinctively to have perceived from the beginning that science is its enemy. And so, while it has made loud professions of friendship to science, and while many of its believers have been truly devoted to science, and in not a few cases have been themselves the promoters of science, yet, as a theology, it has not been friendly, but hostile to science. Scarcely any thing in the history of civilization has been more conspicuous than was its bitter opposition to the Copernican system of astronomy, unless it be its later quite as ridiculous opposition to the science of geology. And to-day it is holding at arm's-length a large proportion of the leading scientific men of the world,—especially of Germany, France, and Great Britain, and these are the leading scientific nations,—and heaping upon these men such epithets as "sceptic," "infidel," and the like. And for what other reason? Only because it sees that the tendency of these sciences and of the investigations of these men is to sap the foundation on which its leading doctrines stand. It grows uneasy; it trembles at the incoming of new light, because it knows not what one of its theories will next melt away before it as a phantom of the night. No; the investigations of reason have already made so fearful havoc with the doctrines of orthodoxy that I do not wonder that the cry should be sounded with redoubled fervor all along the line,—"Believe, only believe; have faith; trust and accept, even when you can't see; and, above all things, do not put your confidence in reason." I say, I don't wonder that this cry

is sounded forth, with almost desperate earnestness, all along the line of the orthodox front.

3. I come now to my third point. Orthodoxy is *immoral*. I affirm that it is not only, first, contrary to the teachings of Jesus, and, secondly, irrational, but that it is, thirdly, essentially immoral. Mind, I do not say that people who believe in orthodoxy are necessarily immoral people; nor do I say that men who preach orthodoxy never preach in addition to it, or, more accurately speaking, in opposition to it, morality. Certainly some men of morals irreproachable are men who undoubtedly regard orthodoxy as true; and some preachers, who preach with great vigor and power against sin and in favor of righteousness, are preachers of orthodox communions. What I say is, that orthodoxy as a theology is mixed up, through and through, with ideas that are immoral in their tendency, and that nearly or quite every essential doctrine of it is either founded upon, or else necessarily involves, principles which, when legitimately carried out, and just in so far as they are legitimately carried out, lead to the degradation of God and the moral injury of men.

The fact that these tendencies are to some extent practically checked, and that these principles do not always flow out to their legitimate results, does not change the nature of the case at all. If I place upon my dinner-table bread that has poison in it, and serve it out to my family, it is only a poor excuse that I also serve out with it other food that is healthful; or, even that I provide to some extent medicines and antidotes to the poison. The fact is, poison is poison, whether material poison or moral, and should never be given into either stomach or brain; nor can it be with impunity.

Let us for a moment look at a few of the leading doctrines of orthodoxy separately.

For example, the doctrine so earnestly preached of the infallibility of the Bible; or the idea concerning the Bible, that every word of it is a word of God, and that the book must be accepted from cover to cover, with no reservations. See what that doctrine involves. It involves believing that it was right, for instance, for Joshua to conquer Canaan; to drive out a peaceful people, who had never offended him, from their homes; and moreover to murder, not only men, but helpless women and children, by thousands and thousands; for we are given to understand that all this was with the approval of God. And some of the most outrageous cases of all, of cruelty and wholesale murder of women and children, we are expressly told were by command of God. Now what kind of morality is that?

So also this view involves believing that it was right for David to pray against his enemies the most vindictive and cruel and shocking prayers; as, that they might be cut off, destroyed, have their bones broken; that God's vengeance might be upon them; that they might never be forgiven; that their wives and children might come to want, and find none to help them; that their little ones might be dashed against a stone. I need scarcely ask whether it was right for David to pray for such things. And yet they appear in the Psalms, and if the Psalms are all inspired so as to be infallibly perfect, then these dreadful and revengeful imprecations must be accepted as of God.

Again, you recollect the conduct of Jacob; how that with the connivance of his mother he deceived his blind old dying father, and made that father think he was

his elder brother Esau, and so got his father's blessing, which Esau ought to have had; thus by dishonesty of the most flagrant kind supplanting his brother, and getting an advantage over him about the greatest possible for a man in those times to gain over another. And no word of condemnation is ever breathed against Jacob, in the Bible account, but, on the contrary, he is everywhere represented as the especial favorite of God. What kind of morality is that? But every man who claims that the Bible is infallible, and to be accepted as every part and particle from God, and perfect, is obliged to receive all these and such like things (and there are scores of like cases in the Old Testament) as right. Now what is that but undermining morality, and degrading the character of God, in the most awful manner?

So, then, who will deny that the orthodox doctrine of the infallibility of the Bible, for one, is an immoral doctrine?

But turn from this to the doctrine of the fall of the race in Adam. That doctrine teaches that because of the sin of one man, the whole human race, not one of them yet born, and some of them not to come into existence until thousands of years later, are held to be guilty, and so terribly guilty that the punishment provided for them is eternal torment. Could anything be imagined more palpably unjust, and morally outrageous?

Then, again, the doctrine of election and foreordination. This teaches in essence that a father chooses and appoints from all eternity some of his own children to be saved and others to be lost. What kind of paternity is it that can do that? Could you do it, or I, even poor, erring, imperfect beings as we are? And if

not, then think you God can, who is the perfect Father, infinite in power and wisdom, and goodness and love?

And the doctrine of the atonement as taught by orthodoxy! According to this doctrine, the race is guilty, Jesus is innocent. The innocent is punished, the guilty go free. What kind of morality is that! Why was the innocent punished, do I ask? So that justice might be satisfied, it is answered. But, I reply, that is precisely the way that justice is *dissatisfied*. Justice that is real justice and not a pretence, never finds satisfaction in the punishment of innocence, no matter if the innocent party does offer himself of his own accord to be punished. To satisfy the demands of justice, the guilty must either be punished, or else forgiven, forgiven squarely and honestly for good cause. And in any transaction of punishing an innocent person, and playing it was the guilty person that was punished, justice can have no part or lot. It washes its hands of all such kinds of things.

Finally, the doctrine of sudden conversion,—the teaching that one may step in a moment out of a condition deserving hell, into a condition fit for heaven, by simply performing the mental act of believing something! What a strange overturning of moral order does this involve! Suppose a case in point. Suppose here is a man who has lived a life as bad as a man can live. He has made a brute of himself; he has blasphemed God, and he has injured his fellow-men all in his power. He is a liar, a thief, an adulterer, a murderer. At last, after many escapes, he is arrested, tried, sentenced to death. Finding that he is really caught, with no chance for escape, he becomes alarmed. He is told to believe in Jesus and he shall be saved. He is

converted — hung — goes to heaven. Here is another man, who has lived a life most exemplary; he has been a dutiful son, a loving husband, a faithful father, a good citizen; a helper of the poor, and needy, and suffering, always; a friend to every good cause; even a supporter of the church and a sustainer of religion; and, in his own way, according to the dictates of his own conscience, a worshipper of God. But he has never passed through that experience of mind called by orthodoxy believing in Jesus. He dies — is lost. The murderer who said "I believe," lifts up his eyes in heaven; the good man, who omitted to say that, lifts up his in hell.

Is that kind of doctrine moral? or is it not rather immoral in the worst way? Indeed, could any teaching be devised tending more strongly to put a premium upon vice and crime, and discourage virtue and morality, than that? If so, I see not what it is.

Other doctrines of orthodoxy might be shown to be as bad as these which I have mentioned. But I have gone far enough. If the specimens already looked at are not enough to condemn the whole system as in its nature dishonoring to God and destructive of virtue in men, then I am incapable of judging.

4. I come now to my fourth and last charge against orthodoxy, viz., that *the time can be traced easily and clearly in the history of the Christian church, when all the more prominent of its doctrines arose, and the way in which they arose and foisted themselves upon Christianity.*

The doctrine of the Trinity came into being, as is well known, in the third and fourth centuries, having had its origin, unquestionably, in the speculative and exceedingly mystical Neo-Platonism of Alexandria. A

theological battle arose over it, which raged throughout Christendom, tearing in pieces the Greek and Latin churches in the most terrible manner, and awakening everywhere alienation and hatred where before had been peace and harmony. The council of Nice, which established it as orthodox, and to be henceforth the faith of the church, for a long time hung in even balance over it; and when at last the council turned in favor of the doctrine, it was by a majority so small as to be insignificant; while there is not wanting evidence (and this from orthodox sources) that the real influence which turned the scale was the Emperor Constantine, a man who shaped all his course by what he thought policy, having several different times in his life changed back and forth between Unitarianism and Trinitarianism. And so, but for the influence of the crafty emperor, who happened at that moment to be training with the Trinitarian party, Unitarianism, the belief of the church up to that time, instead of Trinitarianism, would doubtless have been the prevailing doctrine of Christendom to-day.

Coming down a century or two, we find another new doctrine, spun out of the sombre and metaphysical brain of Augustine, presenting itself to the church. This time it is the doctrine of total depravity. The controversy over this doctrine (called in history the Pelagian controversy) desolated Christendom for well-nigh a century. At last it carried in favor of the speculation of Augustine, and from that time total depravity, with the fall of the race in Adam, was a part of the faith of the Christian church.

Coming on down to the twelfth century, we find the doctrine of the atonement, or the vicarious sacrifice of

Christ appearing. The early church held to no such doctrine. For a long time after the death of Christ and the apostles, Christians were content with the simple representations and statements of the New Testament. And when at last, as the metaphysical ages came on, they began to frame speculative theories, the first theory they framed, looking at all in the direction of the modern doctrine of the atonement, was that Jesus died, not to pay any debt due to God, or to appease the wrath of God, or anything of that kind, but that he died to pay a debt to the devil. A compact had been entered into between God and the devil, that if God would give Christ over into his (the devil's) hands to afflict him and put him to death, he (the devil) would relinquish his claim upon the human race, and allow God to save them from hell. And that doctrine held sway as the received doctrine, until the twelfth century, when the great scholastic theologian Anselm published a book (*Cur Deus Homo*, in the year 1109), containing a new doctrine, to the effect that Jesus died as a sacrifice demanded by God's justice. God's justice demanded the damnation of the whole race because of their fall in Adam; and Christ died in their place, so that they might go free. Well, this doctrine, propounded as it was in the very darkest time of the medieval night, and enforced by the great intellectual ability of its author, at last won its way to acceptance. And so we have it before us to-day, as a doctrine which we are asked to receive, or forfeit salvation.

Coming down the stream of history a little further, we find, in the sixteenth century, Luther's doctrine of justification by faith appearing; and a little farther still, that cluster of doctrines known as Calvinism.

The history of the rise of all these doctrines was essentially similar. Each had its origin in the brain of some theological speculator; each won its way to acceptance in an age of comparative, and some of very great darkness, and only after a battle which long raged, and tore the church into hostile factions, in the most sad and dreadful way.

And now, in our day, all these different doctrines have the audacity to come before intelligent people, and demand to be accepted as Christian. Born at the times they were, and coming into the Christian church as they did, not one of them being held by the church in its earliest and purest ages, they yet have the face to claim to be the very essence of Christianity. To say the least, it is strange, passing strange! But enough.

So much, then, for some of the more prominent of the reasons I have to offer why I, for one at least, find myself compelled to reject orthodoxy as in no true sense Christianity, and to take my stand as a Christian outside of it, to worship the God of my fathers after the way that so many call heresy. A thought or two more, and I have done.

We often hear laments of the decline of Christianity; of the scepticism and materialism of the age; of the indifference of the more intelligent and educated classes to religion. It is said that physicians are generally sceptics; that lawyers are seldom attendants upon churches; that our leading editors and authors usually manifest little interest in spiritual things; that our leading politicians and statesmen are becoming more and more lost to all care for the Christian religion except as a sort of political power with the masses, to be turned to their own personal advantage. So, also, it is

often remarked that the leading business men of our great cities are coming to be less and less church-goers. Now what does all this mean? It has a meaning! What is it? Ah! these things which I have been uttering in your ears this morning only tell too plainly what it means. It means nothing less startling than that the intelligence of this age, and this country, is growing away from a religion too narrow and too unreasonable for it. Things are taught as the essence of religion which vast numbers of these men have come to see are too trivial and absurd for them to give their time and attention to. Accordingly, while they are respectful to the institutions of Christianity, and in many cases rent pews and subscribe towards building churches, and even go so far as to favor their wives and children going to church, they themselves slip out of going just as much as possible; preferring to stay at home and read Tyndall, and Spencer, and Proctor, and the reviews, and their daily papers, from which they can get something that commends itself to their reason and feeds their intelligence, rather than go to churches and hear doctrines which they have heard a hundred times, and which appear the more plainly absurd the oftener they hear them. It is not very long since the New York Evangelist, speaking on this subject, used such startling words as these: "Among all the earnest-minded young men, who are at this moment leading in thought and action in America, we venture to say that four-fifths are sceptical of the great historical facts of Christianity. What is taught as Christian doctrine by the churches, claims none of their consideration, and there is among them a general distrust of the clergy, as a class, and an utter disgust with the very aspect of

modern Christianity and of church-worship. This scepticism is not flippant; little is said about it. It is not a peculiarity of radicals and fanatics; most of those who hold it are men of calm and even balance of mind, and belong to no class of ultraists. It is not worldly and selfish. Nay, the doubters lead in the bravest and most self-denying enterprises of the day."

Said the late Rev. Dr. Newman, in a recent address, as reported in a secular paper: "Within the next decade, aye, and within the next five years, Christianity will be tried as it never has been tried before. There are men in England and America to-day, who will bring to the assault a ripeness of scholarship, a power of intellect, and a breadth of view, unequalled by the past, and there are men and women before me to-night who are destined to have their faith terribly shaken."

It is not long since Bishop Simpson publicly declared that the time had passed by when the Christian church (meaning, of course, the orthodox Christian church) could recruit its ranks any longer from grown men; the only hope that was left to it now was the young, especially the children; therefore he exhorted his religious brethren to give double diligence to their efforts to get firm hold of the children before they grew up, and, of course, got so intelligent (though he did not express it in exactly these words) as to turn their backs upon the churches.

What do all these things mean? Are any so blind that they cannot see? Alas! alas! They mean, what these men whose words I quote are beginning to discern, that Christianity is entering upon a crisis such as it has never known before, not even in the persecutions of the second century, or the throes of the German

reformation. But they mean vastly more than that; and the strange thing is that these men do not see it. They mean that the occasion and cause of the crisis is primarily the astounding folly and blindness of the Christian church itself in continuing, in the very face of all the light and intelligence of the age, to cling to a theology which that light and that intelligence are so fast and plainly discovering to be hollow and false.

The intelligence of the age does drift away from the teaching of the churches of this age, because it ought to; and it will continue so to drift, more and more, as surely as that truth is truth, and God rules, until the time comes when the Christian churches shall have a theology to offer men which does not oppose the plainest teachings of the Founder of Christianity; which does not outrage reason and common-sense; which does not violate man's deepest sense of justice and right; and which has not plainly foisted itself upon Christianity from without, as orthodoxy has done.

I tell you that men who stand up to-day in this enlightened age and country, to reaffirm the old decaying doctrines of orthodoxy, are just bombarding the best brain and culture of the country right out of the churches. No matter if these men do draw crowded houses, and win what for the moment seems a success. It is all the same. Their success is a rush-light. A whiff of sober reason blows it out. In the long run, in the deep and permanent and real effect which they produce, they drive the best thought and intelligence of the country away from Christianity, and, sad as it is to say it, in the direction of disbelief of all religion. The only thing that can hold the intelligence of this age, not to say the certainly larger intelligence still of

the ages coming, is a Christianity which is pure, reasonable, clear and clean from the degrading survivals of darker centuries,—in a word, *Christian*. Such a Christianity, once held up in its divine beauty, cannot fail to commend itself to the earnest and devout minds of this and every other age.

And believe me, friends and brothers, such a Christianity is the certain inheritor of the future. We may not live to see the day when it shall prevail; but prevail it must and will, by and by, *by and by*.

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[No. 16.

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NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL.

BY

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.



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REVIVALS : NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL.

A LARGE part of what is called the Orthodox religion of the United States is a religion of *revivals*. Now what is the theory of a *revival*? It is this, that in the present condition of the Christian Church a steady growth is not to be expected; but that, instead, we may have long seasons of lethargy alternating with short and violent periods of activity. The most important work of religion is believed to be the salvation of souls from eternal ruin; and this is to be chiefly done in these short spasms of religious excitement. Such revivals are usually brought about by some distinguished revivalists who possess the gift of awakening this religious interest. They are sent for and come, and then there is a revival. They go away, and the revival ceases. The men who are most successful in this work are not usually men of large minds, who see both sides of a question, but men who see one side very clearly. They are not critical; they do not doubt or question their own fundamental opinions. They believe in the essential points of their creed, as they believe in the houses and streets and trees; in day and night; in sowing and reaping. This gives them power: all they teach is taught as a reality. Heaven and hell

are as real to them as next summer and winter, and they talk of them in the same matter-of-fact way. Undoubting confidence always gives power to a speaker he convinces us because he is convinced himself. A man who tells men what is really false, believing it to be true, has more influence over his hearers than a man who tells what is really true, thinking it to be false. Such power has God given to sincerity.

The doctrines which are most efficacious in promoting a revival are these: All men are sinners, and all will go to hell as soon as they die unless they are first converted. To be converted is to repent and believe. Both are easy, and can be done at once. We repent when we determine to become Christian men and women and to quit all sin; we believe when we have faith that God has pardoned us because of the atoning blood of Christ.

In order to have a revival, the revivalist must avoid two forms of belief, either of which makes a revival impossible. He must not be a Universalist, and he must not be a Calvinist. If he is a Universalist, he cannot urge immediate conversion as a necessity; if he is a Calvinist, he cannot urge it as a possibility. His great motive-power is the nearness of hell and heaven, and the ability which we have to escape the one *now* and to enter the other *now*. If people do not believe in a hell close by, they will not see the danger; if they do not believe in a heaven with open doors, they will not think themselves able to enter.

All great revivalists, therefore, have been Arminians, not Calvinists. The Methodists have had more revivals than any other denomination. Their origin was itself a revival,—a stirring up of a sleepy church to its very

depths. They are all Arminians, believing in the power of man to repent and have faith. John Wesley denounced Calvinism as a doctrine of devils. Charles Wesley, in his poems, prays God to confound the "horrible decree" of Calvinism, which mocks men by offering grace to all and then denying it to most.¹ Mr. Finney, one of the greatest revival preachers of America, also denounced Calvinism as mocking men by telling them in one breath that they can and that they can't repent; that they will and that they won't obey.² The doctrines of free grace and human ability are necessary for a revival. It is true that George Whitfield and Jonathan Edwards, both great revivalists, were also both of them Calvinists. But this is only an apparent exception; for, practically, in their preaching they taught free grace and human ability quite as much as Wesley did.

Hell close by! Heaven close by! Power from God to escape one and enter the other. Infinite love calling

¹ See "Charles Wesley, as seen in his finer and less familiar Works," edited by F. M. Bird, pp. 189, 190, 194, 195. For example, take the following:—

"O horrible decree,
Worthy of whence it came,
Forgive their hellish blasphemy
Who charge it on the Lamb.

"To limit Thee they dare
Blaspheme Thee to Thy face,
Deny their fellow-worms a share
In Thy redeeming grace."

² In one of his printed sermons, Mr. Finney thus caricatures the appeals of a Calvinist to the impenitent:—

"You can and you can't,
You shall and you shan't,
You will and you won't,
You 'll be damned if you don't."

us to rise out of sin and evil into life and good. A divine power ready to aid us. Tender influences from the unseen world moving around our hearts. Christianity a revelation of pardon and peace to all who will receive them, showing the horror and guilt of sin, the blessedness of obedient love. These are the pivotal facts round which a revival turns; and these, we must admit, are essentially true.

For are we not conscious, in our heart of hearts, that we *are* thus near to hell and heaven? What possibilities of evil there are in us all! but also, what possibilities of good! Can there be any deeper or blacker hell than those we see around us and hear of every day? — the hells of crime which every newspaper describes, — cruelty, murders, base frauds, falsehood, licentiousness, brutality in every form! And if we have been kept from falling into such evils, is it because of any merit of ours? and not rather because God has restrained us by barriers of circumstance, by good influences, by shutting out opportunities of evil? In every human heart there seem to be doors leading down into evil and up into good; and it is rather by God's power and grace than our own, if he has made the way to the one difficult and to the other easy.

If we look, then, at the substance of revival preaching rather than its form, — its essence rather than its letter, — I think we must admit its truth and value. What more true, what more important call, can be made to us than this: "Make you a new heart and a new spirit, for why will ye die"?

It is true that a religion of revivals does not seem the highest kind. We should not think that the highest kind of family affection, of conjugal and fraternal

love, which had to be carried on by a succession of revivals. Here are two families,—the A family and the B family. The way the B's love each other is this: They take no great interest in each other during several months; then they have a revival, and become very affectionate. Mr. B begins to love his wife; Mrs. B begins to love her husband; the little B's have a warm season of brotherly and sisterly love. This lasts for a month or so, and then they become indifferent again, waiting for another revival. The A family meantime live in continued and increasing affection,—never very much excited about it, and never indifferent to each other. One would say that the revival system of *family* love is not the best. Why is it then best for the *love of God?* Is it not better in a church to live by a continued influx of divine life than by such periodical approaches to heaven; such intermittent intimacy with God?

There is also something artificial in those revivals of religion which depend on the presence or absence of this or that preacher. A church of Christ, one would think, ought to have access to God and to his Spirit, without waiting for the leisure of Messrs. Moody and Sankey. It is a sad confession for a church to make, that it cannot convert sinners or refresh saints unless it sends across the Atlantic for a great preacher. We know, indeed, that there are diversities of gifts: it is Paul who says it. But then Paul is speaking of gifts which exist in every church of Christ, by which, through the effectual working of *every part*, it may make increase of the body, building itself up in love. *That* is what we need; a church which can grow up in all things by the forces within itself; not having to look abroad to

find some eminent preacher or famous divine to build it up ; not being obliged to say, "Lo ! here, and lo ! there," since the kingdom of God is *within* it. Here is the description of a Christian church as it ought to be (Eph. iv. 11-16) : "The whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body to the building of itself up in love."

We spoke just now of the revival as applied to a family. Suppose the B family, finding that they did not love each other as much as they ought, should send to the next town for some stranger, famous for his power to promote family affection ; and that he should come and get up a revival of domestic love among them by his exhortations and prayers and singing of hymns. We should think that the family love which had to be kept up in this way would not last long. This is another objection to the artificial system of revivals. It does not always nor often produce lasting results. It does not teach, it has not time to teach, principles of Christian living. It is not radical enough ; it does not go down deep. It has this merit, that it awakens and arouses the community, and calls its attention to the reality of spiritual things. It produces a temporary interest in eternal truth and the love of God. Its defect is, that it is apt to stop there. Men think that they are converted, and that is enough. Now they are safe ; now they are children of God. But to determine to be a child of God is not enough. Conversion is simply beginning the journey. If we begin a journey and then stop, what is the use of beginning ? What is the use of turning round unless we go on ?

The apostles, who were the greatest revivalists ever known,—who awakened a new life of faith, hope, and love in the minds of a dead civilization,—were not content with bringing men to Christ. They occupy the largest part of their letters-missive to the Christian communities in teaching them how to lead new lives; how to be true; how to be honest; how to be good husbands and faithful wives; how to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This is the revival we need to-day and always.

If Christianity is good for any thing, it is good to save the community, not only from a future hell, but from the present hells all around us. It ought to find out how to shut up drinking-saloons; how to prevent pauperism; how to keep husbands from brutally beating their wives; how to make the people take an interest in the cure of public evils: putting an end to the rings by which the people are plundered; putting an end to strikes by which the poor become poorer, and, instead of that clumsy way of helping the laborer, to introduce some kind of co-operation between capital and work. It should meet the new thoughts and criticisms of the time; the new ideas of science; and pour over all the light of divine love, sanctifying all of human life by the presence of an eternal world. When this is done, *all* is done. Till this is done, *nothing* is fully done.

A church which lives by revivals is not in a healthy state. It is like a man in an intermittent fever, sick one day, well the next. If the church of Christ is a sick man, why then we must send for a physician. Let us, by all means, call in any one who will cure him,—Mr. Moody or any one else. But if the Christian church is *not* sick, if it has Christ born within it, the hope of glory;

if it can say, with Paul, "The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God," then it does not need a physician or a revivalist; but rather good food and exercise, work and rest; the daily bread of prayer and duty, of truth and love; the sense of God's presence and care, and sympathy with all human needs and all human interests.

We do not want an artificial revival, pretending to be the work of God when, in reality, it is the result of earthly machinery, and which ends, like all mere excitement, in a relapse into something worse than it was before.

I oppose artificial revivals — the work of man — which take the place of substantial practical religion. But there are natural revivals, which come in the order of Providence; great movements of the Spirit which sweep over churches and nations, rousing to new life. The Lutheran reformation was such a revival. The Methodist movement, the Quaker movement, the Puritan movement, were such revivals. They come, we do not know how or why. God breathes on human souls to-day, as he breathed on Adam, and inspires life, — life, intellectual, moral, social, religious. Let us welcome them all, and not resist the Spirit or grieve it away.

There come hours to the soul of every one, when God, eternity, and heaven seem nearer than ever. Perhaps it is not at church; but in the woods, by the resounding shore, or in the presence of night and its innumerable stars. In these sweet October days, when the soft lights and shadows dimple through the leaves upon the grass, and the summer foliage, like the dying dolphin, puts on a gorgeous robe of many-colored tints, with which to bid us farewell, — at such times there

comes over the soul a sense of the All-Present Power, which works for ever in ceaseless change, but with an immovable rest at the centre. And sometimes, when we have been left to ourselves, and fallen into some sin, there awakens in the soul a solemn sense of the immense responsibilities of life and our need of divine help to save us from the power of evil. Sometimes a mere word, or a book, or a few moments' conversation, seems to open our eyes to the sight of infinite realities. Such a revival is natural and good.

There are also intellectual revivals, which come from God as certainly as the moral and religious revivals come from him. What a great revival of intellectual life was that in Greece, in the age of Pericles! What a new birth of intellect in Europe in what is properly called the Renaissance! What a new creation of genius in England during the age of Queen Elizabeth! Thought, so difficult at other times, seems then easy. Poetry comes of itself; art suddenly blooms out in painting and architecture. All intellects are set free. "Men swim with the tide, and the stream makes them buoyant."

I recollect a similar period, though less in power than these, when I myself was a young man. It was what was called, for want of a better name, the Transcendental Movement. Thought here in New England had been moving in a somewhat stiff way, and culture had taken the place of life. Then there came a breath of air from some higher world, and we had an easy movement of free thought, calling out a whole host of new ideas, and seeming to make the whole world new.

Such examples show that, in religion also, we may expect seasons of inspiration, times when it becomes

easier to commune with God and eternity. Let us be sure and get all the good we can at such times. The leaders in such movements may not be very wise men, but then God does not often call wise men to do his great work. From the ranks of the lowly have always come most of the great prophets and teachers of mankind. All the beginnings of new life have much smoke mixed with the fire. An English bishop said to Wesley : "I am told that you allow laymen to teach and preach. How is that ?" Wesley answered : "It is true. *You hold your peace, and the stones cry out.*" "Yes," continued the bishop, "but I am also told that they are very ignorant men." "That, also, is sometimes true," responded Wesley ; "so the dumb ass rebukes the prophet !"

There was a great deal of narrowness, ignorance, and bigotry in the meetings of the Abolitionists in the United States. But beneath this smoke there was fire. So Martin Luther and the Reformers were accused, and justly accused, of violence, bitterness, and narrowness. But there was fire beneath the smoke, which should consume abuses made venerable by the traditions of centuries. Christianity itself, in the Apostolic Age, swept into its net bad fish as well as good. The Apostle Paul had to warn his converts not to lie and not to steal. But there was fire in the midst of this smoke. We must not, therefore, condemn any great movement like the present because it is conducted by uneducated men, or because there may be mistakes and evils connected with it. "Believe not every spirit" is a good maxim; but it is good also to "try the spirits," to see what is good in them, to accept the good and reject the evil.

The Unitarians and Liberal Christians need a revival

pure religion quite as much as do the Orthodox churches. Some of our preachers seem to think it their duty to give their congregations dilutions of Tyndall and Huxley and Herbert Spencer, and to warn them against too much faith in God, in Christ, in eternity. Do any of us realize as we ought the evil of sin and the need of a diviner life in the soul? We talk of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man; but who among us shows half the zeal in teaching these doctrines which is manifested by many an ignorant revival preacher? I therefore read with much satisfaction the following conclusion of some papers in the "London Inquirer," written by William H. Channing, giving an account of Mr. Moody, his life and work. Mr. Channing speaks thus:—

"But in closing this sketch, let it now be asked, with confident hope of an affirmative reply, 'Does not this story of the life and work of D. L. Moody afford one of the most animating lessons of the all but *omnipotent force of FAITH* that has been given in our day?' Here, surely, is a man whom the fathers of the desert, whom St. Bernard and St. Philip Neri, whom Luther and Zwingle, whom George Fox and John Bunyan, whom the Wesleys and Whitfield, whom Channing and Parker, however much they might have differed from some articles of his creed and disapproved of some of his modes of action, would gladly have greeted as compeer with genuine spiritual heroes. And be it remembered, that this man has not reached his full stature, but is just in his prime. His 'life is not ended and his work is not done.'

"Finally, let one more question be frankly put and

fairly answered: ‘If this unlettered man — this man of one book, the Bible; this man of one method, Conversion; this man of one weapon, Loving Trust; this man with one aim, Hearty Fellowship — has been able to rouse into action the dormant energies of all Evangelical Christendom, as he has done and is doing, ought not we Liberal Christians, with our glorious Gospel of real Glad Tidings, — our Faith so bright, so large, so free, so generous,— to be able to guide those energies onward to an ever-widening good ?’

“Were we but as *faithful* to our ‘Yea and Amen,’ as our Evangelical friends are faithful to their mingled ‘Yea and Nay,’ might we not help to transform Christendom into a New World? When will our own Revival come? And how can we help it on in this our Year of Jubilee?”

Let us welcome all such revivals, so far as they are good and genuine. They are full of the voice of God, saying to us all, “Come up higher!” They may have their faults and follies and mistakes, and these let us avoid. But of all blessed hours in life, the most blessed are those in which God sends over the human soul a new breath of faith, hope, love, insight, action. I welcome them all. In all such great movements there must be some real divine power, mixed up, doubtless, with many human infirmities, but showing clearly what Providence calls on us to do. Is it likely, for example, that such a great movement as “Spiritualism” should not have some important facts and truths under it? Is it likely that an untaught Chicago layman, like Mr. Moody, should have shaken by his *own* power alone, the churches of Scotland and England? I believe there is good as

well as evil, truth as well as falsehood, in all such movements, and it is for us to take the truth and reject the error, not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirit whether it be of God. The marks by which we can thus distinguish the true revival from the false one are all simple, and are given us by Christ himself.

1. The first mark of a true revival is, that it *emancipates*. It makes men free. It breaks the chain of old tradition, custom, habit, prejudice. It takes men out of their ruts, opens their eyes, makes them see truth where they never saw it before. "Ye shall know the truth," said Jesus, "and the truth shall make you free." "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," said the apostle. Thus the Lutheran reformation tended to emancipate the human mind and to set thought free. A revival which ends in making men bigots is not from God, for it has not this mark of the Spirit.

2. The second mark is *union*. A true revival makes men *love* each other. It breaks down the walls of separation of old prejudice, and brings men to work side by side who never knew each other before. So Christ prays that his disciples "may be all *one*." So the apostle says, "that we may all come *in the unity of the Spirit* to the knowledge and stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus." The Spirit of God produces union as well as freedom.

3. And the third mark of a true revival is, that it makes men live *good lives*. "The tree is known by its fruits," and "the fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." The reason why so many great revivals relapse into greater coldness is, that people suppose that if they are converted that is enough. They think

the object of religion is to save the soul from hell, and that they are safe. So they do not improve or become better men and women. But there is nothing divine in such a revival as that. Its root is selfishness, and its fruit barrenness. A man who only wishes to save his own soul has hardly taken the first step in Christian faith.

But what we want, and always want, is a perpetual revival of faith in the realities of the eternal world ; in the divine truth and divine love, which shall take off the burden of care and sin, and lift us out of the ruts of a prosaic life, shall give us new hope for ourselves and others, and fill the world with hope. We wish to rise out of our worldliness and selfishness, and become generous, remembering others ; helping the poor, the sick, the sad ; making our presence sunshine in every gloomy place. We are always tending to routine, formality, self-satisfaction, and lazy content with things as they are. We need to be roused out of this drowsy life. And in every movement which comes, let us listen to hear if God's voice be not in it, saying to us, "*Awake, thou that sleepest, and rise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.*"

FOURTH SERIES.]

[No. 17

UNITARIAN PRINCIPLES AND DOCTRINES.

By REV. C. H. BRIGHAM.



AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

BOSTON.

OUR FAITH.

*The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
onward and upward forever.*

TYPICAL COVENANT OF A UNITARIAN CHURCH.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

OUR DECLARATION

(*As expressed in the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*)

“The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity ; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose.”

(*As expressed by the National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

“These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

“The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test ; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims.”

UNITARIAN PRINCIPLES AND DOCTRINES.

"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." — ROMANS xiv. 4, 5.

THESE words of Paul to the Romans are suitable to preface a statement of the principles and doctrines of the Unitarian sect of Christians. Those who deny to this sect the name of Christian show only their want of acquaintance with its writing and its preaching. It is very easy to make the charge of "infidelity" against a religious body; but to intelligent minds those who make this charge only exhibit their own want of charity or knowledge. Men do not build churches, hold public worship, support ministers, and spend money in works which look exactly like Christian works, and are just what other churches do which call themselves Christians, while all the time they are infidels or atheists. There are some absurdities so patent that they refute themselves, and bring confusion upon their prophets; and to say that Unitarians, who have churches in America, and England, and France, and Holland, and Switzerland, and Germany, and Austria, and have had them for hundreds of years; who pray in Christ's name, and sing hymns in his honor, and commend his example, and repeat his characteristic works,— to say that a sect of this kind is not "Christian," is one of the absurdities that would be incredible, if men were not found foolish enough

to utter it. A similar utterance was that of those Pharisees who ventured to say that Jesus could not be God's prophet, because he did not keep the Sabbath day in their fashion. More sensible men at once answered them that the acts of the healer, and the words of the teacher, proved sufficiently that he was a prophet from God. There were "blind leaders of the blind" in Judea 1800 years ago, and there are blind leaders of the blind in our time. And there are no persons whom these words of Jesus more accurately describe than those who deny the Christian name to a religious body of whose ideas and principles they are ignorant, which they take no pains to know, and who only care to foster the illusion of those who know as little of it as themselves. Paul has words of this class of men, too, in that first letter of his to Timothy, where he speaks of persons "desiring to be teachers of the law: understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm."

There is no need of refuting a charge which refutes itself to a thoughtful mind from the facts which cannot be denied. But a simple statement of Unitarian principles and doctrines, which might be made throughout from the very words of Jesus, may show more clearly the folly of the charge so loosely brought. We separate the principles from the doctrines, since the first are the working force of a religious body, the second only its temporary, possibly its shifting, opinions. Every church must be judged by its principles, by its ideas, by the ideas which move it and give it power. Now, no church has principles more distinctly defined, more universally admitted, than the Unitarian Church. The Episcopal, or Presbyterian, or Baptist, or Methodist bodies cannot be surer of their ideas than the Unitarian. There are certain principles, on which all our churches, all our ministers, all our men and women, communicants and non-communicants, what-

ever their different notions about one or another dogma;—certain principles, upon which all are agreed, which all in our body recognize and magnify.

1. The first of these principles is the grand Protestant principle of the *right of private judgment*. We hold to this in the fullest extent. We say that every man has a right to form his creed for himself, from his own investigation, thought, and conviction, and that no one has a right to hamper him in the process of finding this, or to dictate to him by authority what he shall believe; that there shall be absolute and perfect freedom for all men in coming to religious truth as much as to any other truth. We say that no councils, no synods, no catechisms, no fathers of the church, no doctors of the church, no preachers, no editors, whether of the ancient time or the present time, have a right to lord it over the souls of men, or to say what they *must* or *must not* believe. Every man must settle that for himself. Catechisms, councils, wise men, may help him in his decision, but cannot decide for him beforehand. This is a principle which every Unitarian Church in this country or in Europe maintains with all positiveness, and from which no temptation could draw it away. Every Unitarian asserts the right of every man to think for himself in coming to his saving belief.

2. A second principle of the Unitarian Church is, *that no one can be required or expected to believe what is contrary to reason*, or what seems to be so; that reason is the arbiter of truth, and that all truth is to be tested by reason. Unitarians hold that reason was given to man as his light and his guide, that this is the “*logos*” of which John speaks, and that the only faith which is good for any thing is that which reason accepts. All beyond this is profession,—phrases, but not truth; of no use to any one. All Unitarians are rationalists in this sense, that they do not wish or intend to say that they believe any thing which

seems to them to be mathematically, metaphysically, or morally untrue, contrary to the accepted laws of science or of soul,—any thing which is absurd to the reason, or revolting to the conscience. They will not believe a mathematical falsehood, or a falsehood of any kind, though it may be called a mystery and pretend to be revealed by an angel. Every church in the body, every intelligent member in the body, holds to this principle, however high or deep their thought of God and Christ may be. We are all rationalists in vindicating reason as the ground of faith.

3. A third principle of the Unitarian Church is, that *no man is infallible*; that no creed can be framed that shall be beyond the reach of error, or that shall not be open to change; that no form of words or even of ideas can set forth the absolute truth as it is in the mind of God. The wisest men make mistakes, and they make mistakes in interpreting and deciding religious truth as much as in interpreting and deciding any other truth. There is no infallible teacher, there is no infallible church, and there never can be. A thousand men, or a million men, agreeing to say the same thing, do not make that thing true. A doctrine is not true because it has been repeated for a thousand years in thousands of churches. The Catholic Church is not infallible, in spite of its claim to own the Holy Spirit. The Protestant Church, in any branch, is not infallible, in spite of its claim of going by the letter of the Bible. There never was a saint or a prophet, since the church began, who could say that he was exempt from the possibility of error. All Unitarians hold to their principle. We have no infallible standard in the word of any man, or in the words of any set of men.

4. A fourth principle of the Unitarian Church is, that *no creed can contain the whole of religion*; that religion, religious faith, cannot possibly be summed up in the words

of a creed. No formula, however ingeniously phrased and arranged, can possibly contain all that the soul believes and feels about man and God and the relation between them. Religion is broader, deeper, higher than any creed can possibly be. A creed may attempt to tell what faith is, may tell some things which we believe, but it falls short of expressing all our belief even now, much less all that we may believe hereafter. It may have five articles or thirty-nine articles, or a hundred articles, and still be inadequate. It may be very simple or very complex, very clear or very obscure, and still fail to conclude all faith. Some Unitarians like creeds, while others do not ; but all agree that a creed can never be a finality, never be fixed for all time, and for the substance of all faith, never stand as the barrier to all farther religious advance. There is not one Unitarian, anywhere, in any Unitarian Church, who sums up the religion of all men, or even his own religion, in the words of any creed.

5. A fifth principle of the Unitarian Church is, *that there can be, and that there ought to be, no uniformity of religious faith.* Differences of faith are inevitable. Men cannot all believe alike more than they can look alike or act alike. Their faith will vary with their temperament, with their education, with their habits of thought, with the influences around them. Some will be able to believe what others cannot possibly believe. Some will accept readily what others cannot be persuaded to accept. All attempt to establish one creed for the various branches of the church is preposterous. Sects and parties in religious things are as natural and as necessary as they are in secular things. And it is just as impossible to force unanimity upon the major points as upon the minor points of the creed. All men cannot be made to see God in exactly the same way, or to find salvation in exactly the same way, more than they can be made to take precisely the same

view of Baptism and the Sabbath. This principle of permitted and inevitable diversity of religious opinion is one which all Unitarians, whether of the right wing or the left wing, most strenuously maintain.

6. A sixth principle of the Unitarian Church is, that *sincere faith is the only true faith*; that a mere form of words or phrases does not express a man's faith, unless he knows what he is saying. A man's creed is not what he utters with the lips, but what he utters with the mind and heart; not what he repeats following the dictation of a priest, but what he repeats out of the motion of his own soul. His real belief is not his *professed* belief, but his *honest* belief, be this much or little, be this identical with, or different from, his professed belief. Every thing which one adds to his honest conviction is superfluous, however it may coincide with the dogmas of the church. It is a principle of all Unitarian Churches, that saving faith is not in form of sound words, but in the sense of clear ideas; that sincerity is the prime requisite in all religious statements and confessions. They will never ask a convert to say that he believes one jot or tittle more than he does sincerely believe, even if he may be kept out of the kingdom of heaven by the defects of his faith. Strict and perfect sincerity is the avenue by which they would send forth their confession of belief.

7. A seventh principle of the Unitarian Church is, that *character is better than profession of any kind*, and that profession without character is good for nothing. The character of a man tells what he really believes better than his words can tell this. The acts of a man, his general tone of thought and habits of life, are the expression of his real creed. We look for his belief at what he is, and not what he says he is. We ask for better proof than any declarations, specially made. The creed is written in the life, and the world reads it from the man's life. Every

article must be practically witnessed by the general tenor of the man's acts or words. This all Unitarians assert, whether they have a creed or not, that the creed is second to the life, and must never be made the evidence or the substitute for the righteousness of the man. They infer no man's Christianity from the ease and readiness with which he repeats the phrases of the catechism; but they look first at the work which he does, at what he shows himself to be, whether his life and acts have any resemblance to the acts and life of the Christ. That is first, last, and always their test of the Christian character.

These which we have mentioned,—the right of private judgment; reason as the arbiter of truth; that no man is infallible; that no creed can contain the whole of religion; that difference of faith is necessary and inevitable; that sincere faith is the only true faith; and that life and character prove real belief;—are *principles* admitted by all Unitarians. Turning from these to speak of *doctrines*, we have to say at the outset, that no person can pretend to tell more than the average faith of the body to which he belongs. The Unitarian Church have not, and they never will have, any authoritative creed, any series of articles of which one may say, "that is the creed of the sect," any thing which corresponds to the Augsburg Confession of the Lutherans, or to the Westminster Catechism of the Presbyterians, or to the Thirty-nine Articles of the English Church. One who attempts to tell the doctrines of the Unitarian body must gather these from his study of the books which have been published by leading writers, and from his general acquaintance with the men and women of the body. He can only speak from impressions, and he has no right to commit any one else to his opinion.

The first and highest doctrine of a religious system is the doctrine of *God*. If there is no doctrine of God, there can be no theology. What do Unitarians, in their average faith, believe of God?

1. They believe in the *existence* of God, and in his personal existence; that he is a personal being, with mind, will, feeling, and power, all infinite; that his attributes of infinite knowledge, infinite power, infinite love, all inhere in a substance which is real. They do not attempt to show the form of this great person, to show the mode of this infinite existence, to show what kind of a being a self-existing being — who never was born and who can never die — is. They simply say that they believe that there is a God: they are not atheists.

2. Then, in the second place, they believe in God as the *Creator* of all the things which are in the universe, giving in the beginning the germ of all worlds, and establishing the laws of generation and development, by which the universe has become what it is; that what we seem to see, and what we call *matter*, existed originally in the Divine thought; that God is the author of all being, mediately, or immediately; that all things come from God, on earth or in heaven.

3. In the third place, Unitarians believe that God is a *just God*; in other words, that he *rules the world by laws* which are sure, unvarying, impartial, and universal; that there is nothing in the universe which is not subject to law; that spiritual processes are as much under the dominion of God's law as material processes, — every being, high and low; a grain of sand, or a planet in its orbit; the flowers of the morning faded at night, or the cedar of Lebanon with its thousand years; the meanest reptile and the greatest man; every thing that has being, is subject to a law which the Infinite Ruler keeps for it. They say that God's will is just, because it is according to law, and that when men have discovered the law of any being's life, they have found the Divine justice concerning it. The sternest Calvinist could not believe in the justice of God more absolutely than the Unitarians believe in it.

The laws of God are his decrees, and he has decrees for every thing that he has made. There are no exceptions to these laws; what seem to men the exceptions, are only the result of laws which they have not yet discovered. God is the Infinite and Supreme Ruler of all the things that are made.

4. In the fourth place, Unitarians believe that God is a *loving and tender Father*, having in infinite measure all that love for his creatures which earthly parents have for their children; that God's creatures are his children; that he loves them all, blesses them all, wills the best good of them all, and is never weary of loving them. This fatherly love is his providence for them, — general for all together, special for every one. Unitarians do not believe in any partial providence, any love or care which is for one family and not for another, one people and not for another, one race and not for another, one church and not for another, one age and not for another; — but in a providence which extends to all ages, all churches, all races, all peoples, all families, all men, and all creatures, special always, because always present and never wanting. The fullest idea of an ever-present, ever-active, ever-tender, ever-kind love of the Father of all creatures is the Unitarian idea of Providence. In their idea God can never be a *hating* God, can never cease to love and care for any of his children. His love is incomprehensible, only because it is so immense and infinite, so much beyond all human love.

5. And the name of the Unitarian body suggests another peculiarity of their belief concerning God, — *in his Unity*. They believe that he is *one*, not divided in his Deity, not dual, or triple, or quadruple, or centuple, but strictly *one*. They believe that he exists in one being, and one person, that all his manifestations are gathered and concentrated in this single personality. They speak

of him as one person in describing his work. They address him as one person when they pray to him. His being is single and singular. It is not the society of Gods of which Unitarians think when they think of God. They keep this conception of unity because it is simple, is rational, and best explains the work of Providence and Creation. They believe in the unity of God as distinguished from Pagan Polytheism, or from philosophical Trinities, such as those of India and Greece, and such as those of the church-creeds. They find it entirely possible to worship God the Father without having any other God to divide his worship. And in worshipping God the Father, they worship the God whom Jesus himself worshipped, and whom his word has taught them to worship.

This, then, is what the Unitarians believe of God: that he exists as a person; that he creates all things; that he is just, as he rules by law; that he loves, as an Infinite Father, all his children; and that he is one God, not divided in his essence. How his being is, what it is, what is his form, they do not know, they do not care to know. The finite cannot comprehend the infinite. And they say of God, that no searching can find him out, and that all dictation of what he *must be* and what he *must do*, is foolish and irreverent. They affirm, as much as any sect, the mystery of the Godhead; only it is to them real mystery by its greatness and fulness, and not by its mathematical enigma. God is the eternal wonder of the human soul, so high, so vast, so complete in glory, that no thought can attain his being;— but he is in no sense the puzzle of the soul, vexing it continually by an existence which seems false and wrong, according to the laws of thought. The mystery of the Godhead in the Unitarian creed is not the part of God which lies nearest, but the outlying greatness which shades the farther circle, and is lost in the infinite distance.

Next to the doctrine of God, in a system of theology, is the doctrine of *Man*. What do Unitarians believe concerning Man?

1. They believe, in the first place, that in his physical nature man is *part of the orderly system of organic creations*. He makes one of the series of animated and organized beings. He has wants, instincts, desires, in common with other animals. He eats, drinks, sleeps, walks and runs, rises and rests, utters sounds, and communicates his feeling as beasts, birds, and insects do. The structure of his frame is not essentially different from the structure of other animal frames. It has the same proportion and adjustment of bone, and nerve, and muscle, of heart and brain. Man is animal, is born as animals are born, dies as animals die, in bodily organization, has the same limitations to his physical being. His spiritual nature exempts him from none of the physical laws. He is as much under these laws, subject to physical conditions, as the humblest creature of God. Anywhere on the earth, man has his place and his share in the physical order of the earth. Physically, he is not more wonderfully made than any plant or crystal.

2. But Unitarians believe, in the next place, that man is *at the head* of this series, is the highest and most important of all the visible works of God's hand. They believe in the dignity of his nature, that he is, and was meant to be, Lord of Creation, the master of the forces of the world, and of the lives below him; that he has larger powers, finer feeling, quicker perception, greater range of action, than any of the other beings with which he stands in line; that there is nothing above him in this world, and that the imagination can conceive nothing of which his nature is not capable. They believe that man has an intelligence more perfect, a will more energetic, than any brute beast; that he has, in short, a nature more spiritual than any,—

that man has *a soul*. Concerning the nature of that soul, they hold differing opinions. There is no uniform Unitarian psychology, as there is no uniform orthodox psychology. But upon the fact that man has a soul, they are generally agreed. The spiritual worth and dignity of the human soul is more insisted upon in the writings of the Unitarians than in the writings of any religious sect.

3. And then Unitarians believe that this spiritual dignity is *a possibility of the whole human race*, and is not the property or prerogative of any particular portion of the race. They are far from maintaining that all men are actually equal, in the life that they have, but they maintain that all men are potentially equal, in what they may become, and that they have the same spiritual rights. They have all the same Father, no matter where they are born, under what sky, in what corner of the earth, to what custom of life, to what kind of influence. The savage is a man, and has the rights of a man. The negro is a man, and has the rights of a man. The idolater is a man as much as the Christian. Woman is human, and human rights are hers. Unitarians have no dogma about the first human pair, or the first creation of the race; where it was; in Asia or America; when it was, six thousand years ago, or six hundred thousand years ago; in one pair or in one hundred pairs, or by development from lower races; but they believe in the unity of the human race, as men everywhere have moral sense and religious sense, and may be educated to a spiritual life and into a kingdom of heaven. All men are spiritually children of God.

4. Yet, on the other hand, Unitarians believe in the *actual imperfection of men*. None, anywhere, are as good as they might be, as good as they ought to be. All men are *sinners*, to use the common word, because they transgress laws which are appointed for their physical and spiritual welfare. This transgression is sometimes volun-

tary and deliberate; men know that they are transgressing. Oftener it is involuntary, and is discovered only by the penalty which it brings. Unitarians say that even the best man, who is most careful of his heart and way, is not perfect; that he does, or says, or thinks what is not best, that he makes mistakes, that he violates law. There is no one who is in all things wholly righteous. On the fact of sin, Unitarians have a doctrine as positive as the doctrine of any sect. All men are sinners, all women are sinners, all children even, are sinners, in the sense that they do what they ought not to do, and leave undone the things which they ought to do. All who violate the laws of their being commit sin, and will be punished for that sin; the smallest or the greatest violation of law has its inevitable penalty.

The condition of man as a sinner, as a transgressor of law, makes it necessary to have a doctrine concerning Deliverance from Sin,—concerning what, in the ecclesiastical dialect, is termed “Salvation.” What is the Unitarian doctrine of Salvation?

1. Unitarians believe that salvation is *deliverance from sin itself*,—from its influence, its mastery, its inner force and outer force. They do not expect or ask for deliverance from the penalties of sins committed, or from the penalties of sin while the sins themselves are retained. They believe that the only way of escaping the punishment of sins is to get rid of the sins themselves. They do not believe in sin as an abstraction, but in sins as realities. The best way, and the only way, of getting rid of sin is by dealing with sins as realities, as things, and not as an influence in things. Deliverance from sin is wrought by rectifying the sources of transgression, by substituting right principles for wrong principles, right affections for wrong affections, a right direction of life for a wrong direction of life, by getting temptations out of the way, by purifying passions and appetites.

Unitarians believe that *the method of salvation varies* in the case of different persons. Where men are conscious of any violation of law, the first step must be repentance and a resolution to change from such violation. Where they are not conscious of such violation of law, the evil must be remedied by better surrounding influences and better education. The ordinary means of saving men from sins are training them from childhood in the way of virtue, giving them good precepts and good examples, encouraging all that is pure and righteous in their conduct and conversation, keeping around them an atmosphere of purity, removing all that imbrutes and debases. As so much of the sin of men comes from the circumstances of men,—their mode of life, their society, the influences around them,—they will be saved by setting these circumstances right, by making them more comfortable. As so much of sin comes from disorder in the physical frame, salvation comes in sanitary reforms, in better air, more light, more exercise, more physical health. Unitarians believe that men are saved by the application of the remedy exactly to the need; not by any arbitrary and artificial scheme which is the same for all, and has no connection with the special offence, but by the remedy that belongs to the disease. They would not deliver one person from melancholy by the same process which is to deliver another from drunkenness. They would not save one person from jealousy as another is saved from the habit of stealing. The salvation must be adapted to the offence, whatever that offence may be. Salvation has its difference in degree as well as its difference in kind. A great deal more of it is needed in some cases than is needed in other cases. Those who are spiritually wise need very little of it; those who are spiritually blind and ignorant need a great deal of it. It is much more difficult in some cases than in other cases; more difficult when the sin is of

habit and temperament than when it is of sudden temptation, and not natural; more difficult when it is bound up with interests and passions than when it stands aside from the daily course of life. There are some occupations and positions in life in which deliverance from sin is extremely improbable, some callings in which life seems only possible through continued sin.

Unitarians believe in change of heart, where the emotion and direction of the heart need to be changed, but the saving change in their theology means always *a change of life and action*; a coming back from violation of law to obedience to law. Salvation is the reconciliation of the life to the laws of God, the restoration of the transgressor to obedience. In this work all the change is in the life, spirit, and purpose of men; there is no change in the Divine Father or in his laws. God does not repent; only man repents. God does not alter his work or his counsels; only man changes his work and his counsel. Unitarians do not believe in any *transaction* between God and man in this matter of salvation, or any scheme by which Divine attributes are adjusted in a work which is wholly the concern of the creature. Change of heart and life does not merely guarantee salvation, not merely win this,—*it is* salvation: The salvation comes *in* the obedience to law, not merely *after* the obedience to law. Unitarians believe in future salvation as identical with present salvation; and hold that the only real salvation is present salvation. A man is saved in the spiritual world as he is saved in the natural world,—by obedience to the laws of his being.

The most important influence in this deliverance of the soul and life of man from sin is the *Christian religion*. This saves men in most civilized lands; though Unitarians believe, too, that heathen religions have saving qualities, and that the Chinese are saved from sin by the teachings

of Confucius, the Persians by the teachings of Zoroaster that men are made better by the moral truths even of idolatrous faiths. But they believe that the best of all religions — the religion which gives the highest, broadest, and most spiritual salvation — is the religion which holds the name of Christ. They accept Christ as the Saviour of those who become his disciples, and know his Gospel ; and as indirectly the Saviour of many who are not called by his name, and are not conscious that they know his Gospel. The average Unitarian faith exalts the salvation which is from Christ, and gives it all the practical force which it has in any creed. No epithets of honor are too strong to describe this great salvation.

But the Unitarian idea of this salvation is not that it is mystical, unnatural, outside of the ordinary ways of influences, but strictly according to the natural way of influence. Christ saves men by his *teaching*, by telling them what is just, pure, good, true, noble, and divine, by giving them good instruction, by giving them right moral and religious ideas. He is the great teacher, whose words are wiser than those of prophets and sages. Christ saves men by his *example* ; showing in his own conduct and conversation, as we read his biographies, what way of life, what kind of intercourse, makes men happy, and gives a clear conscience and the sense of God's nearness. Christ saves by the *spirit of his work*, which was in healing and blessing men. Christ saves by his *fortitude in suffering*, instanced in many ways, but especially by his death upon the Cross ; which is, moreover, the supreme sign of self-devotion and sacrifice. Christ saves, as he shows in his word and his act, in his life and death, the incarnation of the Divine spirit, — the *life of a Divine Man*. In speaking and thinking of the salvation of Christ, Unitarians do not separate the human from the Divine in his nature, or one part of his life from another. Men are not saved by

his miraculous birth, or by his miraculous death, or by any thing in his history that is apart from practical adaptation to the human soul. Men are saved by forming his life within their lives, by becoming like him in spirit, in purpose, in virtue, and in faith, by the whole of his life, and by the general influence of his work. They are saved by the Christianity which has *got into the customs of society*, which has been fixed in the statutes and laws which has entered into the relations of life, of business, of the State, or of the Church. Among Unitarians there are various views of the nature and the being of Jesus of Nazareth. Some think that he was different by constitution from all other men, with no human father; while others think that he was what his own Apostles supposed him to be, the son of Joseph the carpenter, and that he had brothers and sisters, as the narrative says. Some think that he lived in an angelic state before he was born, while others give to him no more pre-existence than to any man. Some think that his rising from the dead was in the flesh with which he died, while others think, like the women at the sepulchre, that it was a spirit which appeared in the form of man. But whatever these differing views about the kind and degree of the humanity of Jesus, all Unitarians believe that he saves men by natural influence on their hearts and lives, as he teaches them, shows them their sin, inspires them to seek better things, and demonstrates to them the kingdom of God, the man of God, and the life of God. All Unitarians find this sufficient, without any scheme or contrivance by which God has to appease his own wrath in the slaughter of an innocent person for the sins of a guilty world. In the Unitarian phrase, the word "atonement" always means, as it meant in the one place where it is used in the New Testament,—*reconciliation*; and that reconciliation is in bringing the souls of men to sympathy with God and his

laws. The Unitarian Christology is of one who prepares the souls of men to be the dwelling-place of God's spirit, of a mediator who gives to the soul the message and the substance of the life of God; who showed in a simple human life of compassion, love, and faithfulness, the visible inspiration of God.

And this leads us to say that Unitarians believe that there is a special influence of the spirit of God upon the souls of men. They believe that men are inspired, are quickened, are enlightened and energized by this divine influence; that it is in the word of prophets and in the acts of saints. They believe that there was inspiration in the ancient time, and that there is inspiration in the modern time; that there is a faith in spiritual things, a sight of spiritual truths, which is not the result of investigation, or of logical process, but which is given directly, which comes in conscious communion with God. They believe that *prayer* is the natural and the effectual method of this communion with God, that the Divine Spirit always comes near to the souls of men when they pray sincerely, when they pour out their souls in petition for spiritual gifts, or recognize the providence and love of a living God. Unitarians use prayer, and believe in it, though they attach to it no superstitious ideas, and do not think that its influence is in any sense supernatural. They believe in prayer as wholly according to the spiritual law; as the necessary way of gaining graces of the soul, and of holding conscious intercourse with God. They have not all the same philosophy of its working. Some think that it may move the mind of God, while others see its effective work in the minds and hearts of men. But all confess that it has its place in the way of the spiritual life, and that inspiration comes through prayer.

Unitarians believe, as really as Evangelical sects in their prayer meetings, that men may be and ought to be in-

spired to-day as truly as in any former day; as really, too, as Roman Catholics, that inspiration ought to be, and that it is, in the Christian Church. They have a very positive doctrine concerning *the Church*. They say that the Church is the spiritual union and fellowship of all Christian men and women, of all men and women who have the spirit of Christ in their hearts and are trying to do his work; that it is not to be fastened in any sectarian enclosure, or described by any sectarian name; that no denomination of Christians has a right to call itself "*the*" Church, exclusive of other denominations; that all righteous and God-fearing men and women, who are trying to realize the kingdom and justice of God, as revealed by Christ, are in the Church, members of the Church, whether they belong to any particular Church or not, whether or not they have taken any sectarian name; that the Holy Spirit admits men to the Church, and not the laying on of a priest's hands or the uttering of a few phrases; that a great many persons are in the Church who have never confessed their faith before men, and have never gone through any process of conversion that they have known. Unitarians believe in the "Holy Catholic Church" in the largest sense of that phrase, not as meaning Roman Catholic, or Anglo-Catholic, or Presbyterian Catholic, or Catholic with any local or sectarian prefix, but as meaning the whole company of those who have been influenced by the great salvation. The Church is as wide as the world and as wide as the presence of the Lord. They believe, as Paul believed, that even a multitude of the heathen, without knowing it, are in the Church of Christ; that the only Church which Christ formed, or intended to form, was this spiritual Church, which knew no distinction of name, and had no rejection of any who might wish to come into it. Unitarians do not believe in a Church which bars or bolts its doors to any that wish to come in, or which sets

in the gateway any barrier or test of human opinion or human creed. They believe in a free Church, not in a fenced Church, in a Church which is recruited always and is never full.

Unitarians have no doctrine of Sacraments, except as all obligations, all solemn promises, are sacraments. Baptism they call a sacrament, as it is a pledge of a man or woman for themselves, or for their children, that they will try to realize the righteousness of God in their own lives, or in the lives of their children. Unitarians have no holy-water, and pray when they baptize that the man may consecrate himself or his children by that *sign* of purification. The external act is only a sign, and they regard the manner of administration as of no importance, whether it is by touching the forehead or plunging the body. Marriage is a sacrament, as it is the promise of two souls to keep spiritual union, and to be faithful to one another in the most momentous of earthly relations. The Lord's Supper is a sacrament, as it renews from time to time the promise of brotherly love. Unitarians attach no superstitious ideas to this so-called rite. It is not to them a repetition of the tragedy of Calvary, or a peculiar privilege of men initiated into a secret society, or a reward of religious merit;—in no sense an awful mystery. It is simply a memorial feast, calling to mind the last supper of Jesus and his disciples, and signifying the relation which the disciples of Jesus always bear to one another. Some Unitarians attach more importance to this memorial than others, but all agree in making it a *means* of religion, and not in any sense an end. None that I know would keep any person away from the Lord's table who may wish to come there, whatever his name, his profession, or his character. Unitarians believe that the communion of the Lord's Supper ought to be always free, as it was free in the beginning, and they have no measure of fitness for it. They make

their invitation to it as broad as was the invitation of Paul and Timothy. The Lord's Supper which they believe in is not the Mass of the Catholic Church, or the solemn symbol of the Evangelical elect, separated from the world, but the memorial feast as they find it in the Scriptures of the New Testament.

Unitarians take the books of the Bible as the record of the teaching of God to the Jewish people and to the early Christians through their wise men and their prophets. Their doctrine of the Bible is, that it is a collection of books on various subjects,—historical, biographical, poetical, and moral, of various value, but mostly with a religious bearing and purpose. The inspiration which they find in the Bible is an inspiration of the men whose story is told, not an inspiration of the words and letters. The Old Testament is the literature of the Jewish people; the New Testament is the early Christian literature. Unitarians prize the Bible as much as any sect; use it in their churches, use it in their homes, gladly assist in its circulation; but they do not make an idol of this sacred book, and worship its name. They prize it for the ideas which it holds, and the truth that it contains, and do not make more of it than it really is, or contend that it is what it never claims to be. To them the Bible is in the words of men,—Hebrew and Greek, Latin and English; and it has the characteristics of human thought and speech, even while it tells the will of God.

And the Unitarian doctrine of the Sacred Day is that it is the *Lord's Day*, which preserves in memory that great event in the life of Christ which took away from his followers the fear of death. They do not think of this day as the Jewish Sabbath, loaded with prohibitions, a day on which it is sinful to walk or ride, to laugh or to be joyful, but as a day for the exercise of all the best and freest natural affections. It is no more sacred in itself than any

other days of the week, and has no moral code peculiar to itself. The Unitarian doctrine is that the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath; that there is no more reason for wearing sad countenances when men worship together than when they work together. The dignity of the day comes in the spiritual quickening which it gives; in its associations with what is beautiful, and pure, and friendly, and fraternal; in its separating men from selfish cares and joining them in common prayers for mutual good; in giving them experience of the heavenly life, which is the immortal life. On the Lord's day, men feel their true life, and they have this more abundantly.

And the Unitarian doctrine of death is, that it is *only a change in the condition of life*, not an extinction of life itself. It has no power to destroy the soul, but all its work is in taking vitality from the bodily frame, and leaving the parts of this to dissolve and enter into new material forms. The soul, the living spirit of the man, unclothed from its mortal part, assumes now a spiritual body, suited to a new world and new needs of life. The philosophy of the spiritual world is not uniform with Unitarian believers. Some have it nicely drawn out, and can make pictures of it, while with others it lies vague and undefined. But all that I know agree in rejecting the crude notion of the resurrection of the physical body, and in denying any necessary union between the soul and body after death has parted them. Most Unitarians believe in the recognition of departed friends, that souls which have been joined on earth in love will still keep union in the spiritual world; that in the disembodied world there are near societies, families and kindreds, though the physical ties exist no longer. There are some who think and speak of Heaven as a place; but the faith of the wisest treats Heaven as a state, which may be as real on the earth as beyond the earth.

In regard to rewards and punishments in the future life, Unitarians have no doctrine separate from their general doctrine of law and its violations. They believe that all good deeds have their inevitable reward, cannot fail to bring the happiness and peace which they deserve, but that the thought or expectation of personal happiness here or hereafter, is *not the proper motive of Christian virtue*. Men should do good, because that is right, because that is the will of God, not because it will give them some individual blessing. So they believe that every sin has its penalty which cannot be escaped, and that the spiritual penalty of sin will endure as long as the sin lasts, and until it shall have wrought its due and needful reformation. How long in time this will be, they cannot tell; but they believe that God's counsel will not fail through man's transgression, and that it is the Lord's will that not one of his rational creatures should utterly and for ever perish. They expect, in the consummation of all things, the universal reign of the Lord.

This is a rapid and concise statement of the average Unitarian opinion upon the principal points of religious doctrine. Unitarians claim that these views are rational, and can be maintained without doing violence to reason; that they are Scriptural, and can be justified from the spirit and from the letter of the Christian record, rightly read; that they are agreeable to the best instincts of the soul; that they are harmonious with the science of nature, and with the needs of human life; that children can understand them, and that the mature mind does not outgrow them; that they are good to live by, and that they are good to die by. This system of doctrine has satisfied, and still satisfies, the wisest men and the best men; men who are honored, trusted, and loved; men who are listened to respectfully, and are followed by the praise and reverence of the whole community. Three of the American

Presidents have been members of the Unitarian Church, and two others have given this faith in substance as their creed. Of Judges, Governors, Senators, Congressmen, elected by votes of the Evangelical sects, who have professed this faith, the list would be a very long one. The most distinguished of the writers of the country, in history, in poetry, in philosophy, in art, are nearly all Unitarians. The ablest public speakers find inspiration in these views of God and man. So far as great names lend credit to any doctrine, this Unitarian doctrine certainly has it. But it has in quite as large measure the better credit of noble and beautiful lives, of saintly men and women, who rise, a cloud of witnesses, to tell what it has done for them. The worst bigot in Massachusetts would not dare to call Governor Andrew an "infidel," though he was as faithful to care for his Sunday-school class in the Unitarian Church of the Disciples as for the wounded in the hospitals and the soldiers in the field. No faith has ever been more ready to prove itself by works of love and mercy than this faith. If it has not sent many missionaries to fight against idolatry in heathen lands, and substitute for this idolatry the creeds of Augustine or Calvin, it has sent far more than its proportion of missionaries into the waste places at home, into the haunts of wickedness, to convert the blind, and the erring, and the sinful. No one can deny that Unitarian Christianity makes ministers of practical righteousness.

Unitarians are not indifferent to the good-will of the Christians around them. They do not like to be misrepresented, or to be treated as outlaws, even by ignorant and bigoted men. But they can stand alone, and are not to be driven from their position by any slanders. They will hold fast to what they believe to be truth, even if they are denounced as unbelievers, or are denied a place in the great salvation. They want no Heaven which is won by

compromise or hypocrisy; and they will lose the society of men whom they respect rather than be false to the word of God as it is spoken to their souls. They hold their doctrine not as a finality or a perpetually binding creed, but as ready always to revise and improve it, as the spirit of God shall give them more light and knowledge. They own no master but the great Teacher, the great source of spiritual wisdom, and they are content to abide his judgment. They ask no triumph or success, but the triumph which truth shall give them, as shown in the logic of their argument, and as shown in the lives of their confessors.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

Tracts descriptive of Unitarian principles, doctrines, and methods, are sent free to any who desire to know what Liberal Christianity stands for and works for. A list of these free tracts will be sent on application. A full descriptive catalogue of the publications of the Association, including doctrinal, devotional, and practical works, will be sent to all who apply. All religious books by Unitarian authors are kept on sale, and will be sent on receipt of price. A list of such books, with prices, will be furnished upon request.

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[No. 18.

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AT CHICAGO,

By REV. BROOKE HERFORD,

DURING THE

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REVIVAL EXTRAVAGANCE

CAUSED BY

RESPECTABLE INDIFFERENCE.

"The prophet that hath a dream let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat?" — JER. xxiii. xxviii.

It has come very strongly to my mind, in the course of testifying against the extravagance of this revival which is now going on, that there is a word which urgently needs saying on another side of the subject. I feel that this revival movement should suggest something else to those of us who have no faith in it, — calls for something else from us besides criticism or protest. Even the fact that the criticism and protest were called forth not by the mere mischievousness of the preaching, but by the vehement denunciation of all who could not so preach, does not lessen the necessity for something more and better. It is always a poor thing to hinder what others are doing — mistakenly, it may be, but still earnestly, — and to offer nothing nobler instead. Especially is it poor when the slackness and inefficiency of the nobler thing is the very cause of the success of that which is less noble. And that is exactly what strikes me about that work which I have felt obliged to speak out against, and which in less public ways so many in other churches have spoken against. This "revival" is not something that stands alone, unconnected with any thing else. It is not so much a cause as an effect, and an effect the real causes

of which lie further back and deeper in than the nominal and apparent ones. Again and again, while this has been going on, people have said to me, "What is the cause of this immense excitement?" Some set it down to the gigantic puffery with which it has everywhere been heralded, which certainly has contrasted curiously with the eager professions of entire dependence on the Holy Spirit! Some attribute it to the gregarious curiosity by which a crowd always attracts a crowd. Some think the secret is in the preaching, and others find it in the singing. I think it lies deeper down than any such matters. It lies in the deep fact that man must have religion; and, if true and noble religion be not within his reach, he is at the mercy of false and ignoble religion! The verities of faith are the grand realities of human life. The soul cannot do without religion any more than the body can live without bread. If it cannot have bread, it will snatch even at husks. If those who know the beautiful, simple, elevating truth about religion do not keep it in its right place before men,—well, for a time the world may ignore it altogether; society goes on as if it were not, and plunges deeper and deeper into worldliness, becomes more and more intensely material. But that cannot last. By and by the higher nature asserts itself again,—asserts itself in a dumb, restless dissatisfaction; craves for something better than it has, or is, and is ready to be carried away by the first vehement fanaticism which stands up and speaks out about these things in plain, unhesitating words and deadly earnestness.

At the root of this whole subject of the revival lies the lesson which it teaches us with such tremendous power,—of the reality of man's spiritual nature and of the religious things which answer to it. Man doesn't live by bread alone. He cannot. There is a whole great life in him that must have something more. The history of man-

kind is teaching this anew every year. It teaches it by the highest life which manifestly is lifted into its pure, strong, beautiful height of noblest manhood by faith; and it teaches it by the great mass of common worldly life which keeps trying, one way or another, to live without faith and cannot. Here is this great, seething life of our mighty American and English cities. When I argue about what religion is to man, I am pointed often enough to these toiling millions and asked, "What is religion to them?" I am told they haven't it. What do they care about the churches? What are the controversies of the day to them? Faith is a sentimental delusion for the leisurely classes; an amiable relic of early training in those who haven't had the unreality reasoned out of them by free discussion, or knocked out of them by life's sternest facts. That is the tone of the *dilettanti* philosophy of the present day, and of the advanced liberalisms that think they have outgrown the past. And they hold their little, intellectual coteries, and settle their mild, supercilious scepticisms according to the latest speculation that passes for science or philosophy, and look pityingly at the crowd that are not so far advanced, and sit, like Tennyson's personification of pure art,

" Holding no form of creed
But contemplating all."

and think that so "the riddle of this painful earth" is emptied of its divine mystery and everlasting awfulness!

And here come these great waves of religious excitement through society, catching up tens of thousands in the sweep of their fervor, rousing dulled, hardened souls, awaking torpid consciences, touching deeper feelings in multitudes than they ever thought they had in them, making men feel conscience and God and eternity the awful realities that they are, and lifting up crushed and earth-

stained and hopeless hearts into the joy of experiences which, if they are not as lasting as they hope, are yet glimpses of the truer life that might be, that is possible to all. Your little systems are shivered into atoms by the touch of these mighty movements and longings of man's nature. These are the great necessities. You cannot see them. You cannot touch them. Yet, age after age, they keep reasserting themselves as the most tremendous factors in man's being and life; and never do they re-assert themselves with more startling power than when, at the touch of some revival movement that seems in itself quite inadequate, they burst forth with a passionate eagerness that may be short-lived, but is intensely real.

The real, wholesome, beautiful answer to this unquenchable craving of the human heart is that religion of Jesus Christ,—Christianity in that holy, loving simplicity in which he himself went about preaching it. But what is to be the witness to men of this religion? It stands in its beautiful holiness and purity in the four Gospels,—and any one can buy those Gospels for a few cents. But is that witness enough? No! No beautiful sentiments on a printed page can speak to humanity at large with the power that humanity needs. Mankind is not saved by books, but by men. I feel to come nearer to the heart of what the apostles meant by speaking of Christ as “the word made flesh,” when I see how, age by age, “the Word” has always to be “made flesh;” the high truth, the divine thought, has always to be translated into life, brought out in living manhood and womanhood in order to have its real power in the world. And that ought to be the living significance of all these Christian churches that rear themselves in their calm beauty in the midst of man's eager, hurrying life. They ought not to stand for a dead Christianity, but for a living Christ; and they ought to stand for him, not by the creed they sug-

gest in their name or embody in their rules, but by the spirit which those who uphold them and belong to them are honestly trying to cherish and to live out. There is nothing more beautiful in this world than the idea of a number of men and women, touched by that beautiful, simple, merciful life of Jesus Christ, drawn together by their loving reverence for him, and trying how near they can come to his spirit, and how nearly they can reproduce it. A band of Christian people, touched by the sense of his thought and feeling towards God, and his thought and feeling towards men ; coming together, week by week, to try to get a clearer, more realizing sense of that thought and feeling of his ; and, in the light of that, looking up in happy worship to the great Father-Life, doing what they can together for that work of saving and blessing the world all about them, and going back into the world's common ways and doings, with purer hearts, and strengthened purposes, and a sturdier hold on duty, and a tenderer, kinder feeling to all with whom they have to do. That is the true idea of a Christian church ; that is what every church of Christ ought to mean : that is what this Church of the Messiah of ours here ought to mean, and every church in this great city. What a blessing and what a power, if there were any thing of this kind ! I don't say if they were this perfectly, but if this was the main spirit and purpose, if this was the idea that those who build them and those who carry them on, — those at the heart and the head of each society, — really held before themselves and their fellow-members, and tried for with a spirit worthy of such an aim. Could such churches fail of their effect ? Chrysostom used to say that "if the Christian church were but for one day what it ought to be, the whole world would be converted before nightfall."

But oh, what a humiliation to turn from these thoughts — and they are the simple truth — of what Christ's

churches ought to be, to think of what they actually are! "Beautiful outwardly." Yes, I suppose there never was a land in which the churches were more richly adorned. Do I object to that, in itself? Not I! I always have maintained that the buildings we raise for our worship of God, and for winning men into discipleship to that great Teacher and Saviour, should be the most beautiful that our hearts can devise, and that it is an object which deserves to be glorified with every thing by which art or music can attract, rest, gladden, elevate the soul of man. But what if the grandeur and magnificence of the churches are only another branch of the ostentatious extravagance which is sapping the simplicity and honesty of modern life? What if these costly structures are erected not for the glory of God, but for the glorification of their builders! What if they are the outcome, not of humility delighting to give the very best and most it can for God, but of pride wanting to outvie the rest of the churches round! What if they are the outcome not of giving at all, either from humility or pride, but of borrowing, what is given being about enough to build a plain, substantial church; and the extra amount that goes for grandeur and adornment, being not anybody's gift, but a great borrowing speculation in the hope that it may draw in a crowd, and be cleared off some time! And what if this cheap, borrowed magnificence, instead of drawing people in, keeps them out,—by making the cost of keeping it up too great for poor or struggling people to take their share in; and, instead of ennobling the church's life, utterly belittles it with a constant worry of care about its debt! I am afraid that it is so; I don't say everywhere, or altogether, but that this element enters into the church-life of this time with a blighting and deadening power. And it is mischievous all round; for it not only keeps out the poor, but it keeps out multitudes who would repel such an epithet, and yet

who do not like to join a burdened and struggling cause ; and, worse of all, it exhausts the zeal and working power that is wanted for simple, loving Christian work, in fairs and entertainments and the innumerable devices for eking out the insufficient funds.

And turn from the thought of the outward temples to the inward church,— the bands of men and women who make up the real churches in God's sight. That is what matters most ! That is what tells most upon society ! And I believe it does tell, to some extent. I do not believe there is a church but has at the heart of it some little band of earnest, true-hearted people, who are ready in every good work, and who do their share twice-told, perhaps, in order to keep this and that good Christ-like work going, the best they know,— the faithful few who are always at their posts, always cheerful and kind, always ready to "lend a hand." But how many are these for all the churches that there are ? And what must be said about the rank and file?— the people who have never taken hold of religion with any earnest purpose of their souls, never set their hearts right to it ; who are interested in their church to some extent ; want to see it successful ; want to hear it well spoken of in the city ; are apt critics if any thing goes awry, but who have no idea of putting themselves out of the way for it ; who don't begin to know the meaning of self-sacrifice ; who are glad enough to join in church entertainments, but never lift a finger or give up a luxury or a pleasure to help the church's work upon the world.

And how many more are there about our churches who are not even of this much use ! who have some sort of connection with this or that church,— go there when they go anywhere ; or, as is the case with thousands, who never take hold anywhere at all, but now and then, when the humor takes them, turn into some one of the churches

about,—and that is about the whole of it; and yet they would think it very uncharitable if they were told that they were not Christians; and if they are sick they look for Christian comfort, and if they are dying they look to be buried with words of Christian hope. And they are always “liberal,”—oh, yes, ever so liberal; but it is the liberality which comes not of thinking for themselves with earnest freedom, but of not thinking earnestly at all.

Oh, but this religion of Jesus Christ is good for something more than this “respectable indifference”!

What can this do? What can it do for those who hold it so? What can it do for the great world outside, that so sorely needs living light and cheer and help? Why, think of what is round about these Christian churches here in our cities. You are proud of your city, proud of its architectural beauty, proud of its dauntless enterprise, proud of its vast population;—you may well be. So am I. But is that all? Is there nothing that you are not proud of, nothing that, sometimes, as you see it, makes you feel a wondering sadness and a longing that something could be done to make things better? Do you ever pass through those worse and poorer quarters where the wretched, broken-down houses are huddled together, with no trim gardens and no tree-bordered streets? And if you do, does it set you only trying how quickly you can “pass by on the other side,” or only thinking that a great fire would not be an unmixed evil, if it only swept that “poor property” away? Does it not set you thinking what life must be there,—what it must be to the little children, many of them brought up to swear and beg and steal, so few of them ever in the public school; what it must be to the poor women, whom you see here and there, about those shanties, draggled and slovenly, all the sweet grace of womanhood long faded out of them; what it must be to the men, whom, on Sundays, if you will

look, you may see loafing listlessly about? When you see such things,—and they are near enough and plenty enough, if you will only look for them,—does it never cross your mind how Christ would feel about them, if he were here? Do you think he would spend all his leisure riding up and down your avenues or boulevards, and have a seat on Sundays in some high-toned church, and think no more about it? Or that, if his attention were called to all this, he would give ten dollars now and then for some poor mission, and that, perhaps, with a feeling that, really, religion is getting almost too expensive for hard times?

And it is not only for such as these. I am not thinking especially of what the churches might be to the poor. I feel that there is a much larger failure in them than that. I look at the hard, keen, driving life of this great community. I look at the tens of thousands who go down, day by day, into that great fierce race and battle of toil. I think of what life is to so many of these,—such a grim, eager strain; such heavy cares; such weariness, a weariness that at night leaves them with no spirit to read or think, that on Sundays leaves them hardly heart to pray. I think of them as life wears down towards age, and the brightness has faded, and the pleasures have ceased to please; and perhaps success has come, but a success with care and restlessness, and no happy peace at the heart of it. Perhaps success has not come; but only the old, hard, up-hill path for the tired feet, and away beyond all a coming change that may come any day, and which the heart has no joy in thinking of, but rather tries not to think of, wishes to ignore,—but cannot.

I think, in a word, of all the eager, driving worldliness of this time, that I suppose has to be, but that needn't be alone; that might be lighted up, sweetened, made a purer, better thing by the religion of Jesus Christ. It is not one class, nor another class, but the whole life around us,

that wants these old, everlasting truths of God, and the soul and providence, and duty and eternity, witnessing to it with the living earnestness of hearts on fire with faith. But the churches go on in their old, dull way, some of them droning out doctrines that thoughtful men have lost faith in, that no one puts very strongly now, that the living power has gone out of. And others with nobler, larger thoughts only half uttering them, putting the new wine into bottles as like the old as may be. And others again, with perhaps the brightest, clearest truth, content to have it; doing nothing to make it a power; with light, but no heat; with very much respectability and very much indifference! And so the multitude pass by.

All this is what gives the revival its power. Here is this mighty mass of human lives,—with their cares, their follies, their pleasures that don't half satisfy, their eager worldliness, their sins, their vague, fitful thoughts of faith; but, under all, hearts and consciences and souls that are going to live on for ever, and can never quite forget it. Is it wonderful that when, at last, there comes along a man who has nothing of the dull routine of the churches about him; who talks about these grand realities not in mincing, pulpit phrases, but in the downright language of store and street, who is in dead earnest, and speaks in tones of fierce conviction, and who has, at the heart of all, a kind, loving anxiety for every wretched drunkard, or poor, lost child he meets,—is it wonderful that men crowd to hear him? The people can understand him. He makes religion a living thing to them. He breaks down their doubts by the sheer force of his own vehement certainty. He proclaims to them bright hopes which answer to the half longing of many a wakeful and restless hour. He lifts them, if it be for a short-lived ecstasy, out of the dull, unenlightened greed of earthly care. He touches the springs of thoughts and feelings which many have hardly been conscious of since they were children.

Why, then, do I lift a word against his work, some of you may feel inclined to ask. Why? I ask myself that, sometimes. It cuts me to the quick to have to do it, and all the more that I am conscious that his word and work so carry people away, because those who have had truer and better things to say have not said them, or have said them with such slack indifference. But all the same the word of protest has to be spoken. For it is one thing to waken up men's souls, and another really to help and save them. I believe Mr. Moody is wakening up these souls to give them something that will not satisfy, and that has no saving in it. I believe he excites them into a moment of ecstatic glory, which too soon they will find out is not the salvation he persuades that it is, and which will soon leave all but a very few in a more helpless state than they were to begin with. I believe his whole basis of appeal is dishonoring to God and degrading to man, and one which, if the churches suffer themselves to be carried away by the vehement eagerness with which he insists upon it, would put back the whole tone of their thought and work a quarter of a century. So, I dare not hold from speaking. I dare not let the great, bright truths of Christ's own gospel which have been coming into clearer view throughout all churches, be clouded over by this whirlwind of old, worn-out, mischievous superstitions for the sake of the thunderbolt which is undoubtedly at the heart of it.

But, having so spoken about this revival, I feel that I am bound to be doubly plain and faithful in speaking henceforth about the duties of every Christian church and all Christian people. I think it has never come to me so strongly before, what a blessing to men that simple, practical religion, as Jesus Christ himself preached it and lived it, might be,—aye, how awfully needed it is, and how the silence and indifference of those who hold it leave

men at the mercy of every vehement zealot even of the poorest superstition. I would that my voice could reach all those who hold the more liberal and reasonable faith in other churches besides ours, and yet who, from love of peace, let the old errors stand for the only way of salvation and make no sign. I know that there are numbers of such people. I do not believe that there is a church, even among those that most pass for "evangelical" and "orthodox," and that stand firmest for the "ancient ways," which does not include people who no more believe those old schemes of doctrine than I do, and who, in their own thoughts, just hold for the simple Christianity of the Prodigal Son and the Sermon on the Mount. I appeal to these to be more outspoken. The time is come when your openest word is needed. I do not ask you to speak out from my standpoint. Speak out from your own,—only *do* speak out. You speak your liberalism in closets when it wants telling from the house-tops. You are speaking of it just enough to clear your own souls, when it wants speaking out loud enough to help other people's souls. Let those who still believe the dreams of the old creeds, preach them; but "He that hath my Word, saith the Lord, let him speak my Word faithfully."

And I would fain speak to those who have kept aloof from churches altogether; who hold very much this simpler faith — this thought of the great Father-Life, this appreciative trust in human nature, this large, charitable hope for the life to come, — but who have, perhaps, found no church that has seemed a worthy embodiment of it, and so have never joined themselves with any. I urge you to quit this fruitless isolation. You will not find any perfect church this side heaven. No; but band yourselves with those who seem to you the nearest to the truth as far as you see it, and the openest to see more truth. Perhaps you do not think they can help you

much; well, help them; strengthen their work; throw yourself heartily in among them. Why, the liberal faith should be the strongest of all to-day, if only those who hold it, more or less clearly, would all join heartily together, and make it a living power and help it on.

And now, my final word to you, my fellow-members of our own church. I ask you to take these thoughts at heart. Ask yourselves if we have been all that—with this broad, manly freedom of ours, and this strong, simple Christianity—we ought to have been: Ask yourselves how far these words I have been speaking about the respectable indifference of the day are true of our church. Ask yourselves what we are doing to make our Christianity a strong, happy reality among ourselves and to those outside. Face the truth and fact about this, in the solemn light of that great need and craving and preparedness of society which this revival has revealed. And may God, who has given us the light of our faith, touch our hearts with the fire of it, that so our church-life together may be kindled into that warm, happy glow which, week by week, may make it good to us to meet together, and which may shine out through all our word and work into the world of doubting, struggling, care-worn, tempted souls with something of the spirit of the Master's invitation, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

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[No. 19.

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BY C. A. BARTOL.



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JESUS AND HIS CRITICS.

CRITICISM of Christ's doctrine or position has usually spared his moral character. But we must not wonder at its reaching *that*; for a critic is a jealous man. A critic has been called a truncated poet, as a vessel with her top-masts cut off is a razed ship; and while it is the valuable function of criticism to discriminate and point out error, it may have no capacity to comprehend truth. Beware, in being critical, lest you be censorious! Christianity and its author are proper subjects of criticism, if we bear in mind they cannot be put within the compass of our understanding, and require imagination, affection, sympathy, and moral sensibility, before we can approach to take their gauge. In vain we try to measure any thing or person; the smallest fact being constituted by its relation to the infinite in this wonderful, indefinable, and inexhaustible world. There has always been dislike of identifying human development with the Christian name; and it is notable that the most recent revives the earliest criticism of Jesus,—namely, that he was insane, had a demon or devil; and when many of the Jews added, He raves, or is mad, they summed up the whole indictment against his moral character, of being both crazy and heady,—which is still brought. M. Réan, the French scholar, who has written a sentimental biography of Jesus, calling it *his life*, with all the learning and grace of his

work, proves, perhaps, as running in his light French blood, an incompetency to appreciate the sublime Hebrew in those qualities too high for any dancing spirits to reach, while also too grave for any gay literary sparkle to set off; and American talent must do something more and better than borrow the pencil of Gallic genius to make a portrait that will stand of the grandeur of him who was at once Son of God and Son of man.

M. Rénan says, that the man Jesus, who was God only so far as he showed the divine image, grew less in going on, the stream of his worth and being narrowing toward its close, while we know it is the property of a great mountain-fed and sky-fed river — Amazon or Missouri — to widen at its mouth. The implication is, that we have here no chief martyr or supreme hero. But real greatness or goodness grows more and more. Socrates surely waxed to the end. The last days of Buddha were his best. Mohammed refined as he went on. It is the law of character in the course of providence to improve, to slough off mortal defect and infirmity, to bear the test of trial and be glorified, to run like gold clear of dross from the furnace, and so to vindicate the way of God with His servants before the eyes of mankind; and, if Jesus was an exception to this law, it seems so far a demonstration that he was of inferior temper or base metal, and not one of the royal few. But, as I think, it is the criticism and not the subject that is at fault; and what alone the criticism proves, is it not lack of the deep soil needful to root the seed the Master sows? What but the fruit with ripened cluster is the branch's appreciation of the vine? We shall never estimate the excellence into which we do not grow; and as to this supposed and surprising diminution of our Lord as he advanced into the thickening shadows of his shortening career, neither fact nor text bears the critic in his assumption out. How un-

natural for a man to diminish and decline, who was but a little over thirty years of age when he died! while the very philosophy of history would be accused of mistake if a dwindling current, like that of those water-courses lost in the desert sand, could have so miraculously opened afterwards broader and richer than the Nile, and Arethusa-like, to fructify two thousand years since in the expansion of mankind: it were a violation, indeed, of the law of cause and effect.

But Rénan and his copyists stand quite apart from the multitude of fair commentators and wise judges in this view, which is not justified by the record itself. Dr. James Walker, a cooler head than Rénan's, and naturally more sceptical, while as studious and rational for a longer term of years, declared, as did the artless evangelist of Christ's boyhood, and John the Baptist of his manhood, that Jesus increased and spiritually grew. He thought that the scourge of small cords for the cattle and traders, which the doubtless warm-blooded Nazarene made at the beginning of his ministry, he would neither have woven nor wielded at the end. Certainly none did he weave or wield. And if there be a sombre color in the great prophet's mien amid the closing scenes, if there be denunciation of hypocrisy or prediction of doom, a cloud hanging over Gethsemane, and a shadow, which the dim sun conspired with, darkening the earth from the cross,—for what should all this be cited but in evidence of a more solemn conviction as well as declining worldly fortune? Surely not, against all the indications, does it argue hope extinguished or a virtue that failed! What does virtue consist in, for its origin or issue, but the persuasion, for its first purpose and final resort, of a just retributive award,—a persuasion which to him was a perpetual thrill? What is hope but appeal beyond all calamity, such as Christ lifted first and last to God?

Beside, if a stream does sometimes — like the Danube or Saguenay — contract as it proceeds, hemmed in by hill and crag a hundred or thirty hundred feet high, it deepens, too, like the cañons in Colorado, or as that strange northern Canadian tide does in places near half a mile for the line to fathom, where the boat cannot be anchored, but must be moored to a tree on the bank ; while the Euphrates and Mississippi grow shallow as they grow wide. The multiplied river-mouths prove not depth. So, will Rénan, or any follower or imitator of his, tell us if they have sounded the feeling of Jesus in the garden beneath Calvary, where *he* was hemmed in and could no longer spread smoothly through Galilee as a smiling field ? In his profound emotion, in his bloody sweat of supplication, I think he was greater — not less at that point, the terrible gorge and ragged cleft of his lot — than when on the mountain he taught or prayed, or in the boat across the lake he sailed, or by the well in Samaria he sat with the woman and talked, or walked that pleasant Sunday, heedless of fences, through the corn and plucked the ears, or enjoyed even more than *they* did his own benediction on the babes ; for who could not with incomparable transport delight in *that* ?

A touch of lunacy was there as the action became intense, and proceeded to culminate in the tragedy of his life ? Well, Paul, taking that superficial Governor Festus's idea of the matter, was beside himself ; and Socrates, by his own confession, had a demon for a check ; and George Washington in a certain battle was exalted above himself ; and Stephen had a hallucination, did he, when he saw the heavens opened ? and Moses was a fool, idiot, or pretender, when he met the Lawgiver of heaven and earth amid the lightnings of Sinai ? Is not everybody crazy to-day who erects a higher standard than the market, and calls to a purer life than the custom of the world ? To

be great, to be holy, is to be moon-struck and mad! No: I find sanity where the critic finds insanity; and not the seer or saint, not Jesus or Peter or John Brown; but we slaves of custom, tools of ambition, victims of bad habit, and devotees of gain, worshippers of mammon,— are in the wards of the asylum, not of brick and wood, for the weak-minded, while we seem to tread the ample space. I doubt not some crazy folk are near by now! “*Where is the hospital for the demented?*” one asked the patriot Pettigrew, in Charleston, when South Carolina was seceding. “*You cannot go amiss,*” answered the sage and level-headed, even-voiced old man: “*it is everywhere here now!*” What the critic calls insanity I call the grand climacteric of the Master’s life.

But Christ was over-excited surely; his mother’s temperament was too much for him, and bore him off his feet into ecstasy, till he lost his footing altogether in what the critic characterizes as his *diatribes*, towards the conclusion of his career, against sinners, Scribes, and Pharisees? I ask, in answer, is there no room for earnestness, no propriety in being stirred? Is composure a stagnant pond? Is tameness balance of mind? Is a pool a truer sign of health than the rolling and foaming sea? In a murky, breezeless air is there better poise than in a thunder-storm, or the bracing, wholesome wind? If unripling stillness and unruffled calm be the signal and manifesto of human perfection, I say, let us have no perfect men! Away with them all, with their spurious claims! A perfect man *so*, in this world of need and error, where every thing cries aloud for change, progress, and reform, were an annoyance, a nuisance, and bore! Christ’s own disciples have hurt the real type of their Master’s character by making it too humble and meek; as his enemies have maligned, by saying it was not humble and meek enough. Is Nature bewitched, off her decorum

and off her guard, in the electric blaze and clap, — such as lately startled Boston to its feet, — by which she purges the foul accumulation in winter, and summer's sultry heat? No more is the human soul, when raised, as in Christ, by conscience to the highest power, — it flashes and rattles through the unwholesome and corrupted social sky. Do not modern radicals and reformers thunder too, or ought they not? It may be thunder of the theatre, and not of the sky. So far from wishing to take out those chapters of woe on liars and hypocrites, with a view to improve the narrative and present the great preceptor's face nice and smooth, as of one sitting for his portrait or photograph, regular and unimpassioned as an engraving in an album, I think such abstraction of motion and heat would be a fatal injury to the picture. Motion and heat were the glory. The sun's light comes of its heat. According to the great philosopher Leibnitz, creation is no statue or passive daguerreotype, but a perpetual motion, as we see. It is a series of *fulgurations* or thunders from the source of power and right; and the man who is most god-like will never be posing for his likeness, or looking anywise at his shadow; he will not glance over his shoulder after critic or spy; he will not be always at his ease in a professor's chair, or locked up in a minister's study, or standing in an artist's studio, or walking in Plato's Academe: but out of doors and among men, watching and providing for the human weather, teaching and warning with his *Indications*, prescribing duty and foretelling consequence, though the temple tumble in all its stones, and Jerusalem be destroyed.

If Christ's feeling grew warmer, it grew nobler; and it was no selfish humor. Witness his bidding the disciples sleep on and take their rest the Gethsemane-night! Witness his prayer for his crucifiers on the more terrible morn! Witness, if his own will for a moment gave way

at what he called the cup, it gave way, as sooner or later must all our wills, to the will of God. His patience before Pilate, his silence under false accusation, were toward the last of his life. Do they prove the dwarfing? No wonder he has been deified by the fond votaries of his church! What apotheosis of Greek sage or Roman emperor was ever so deserved? He would reign but to serve, and, like God, to bless. Yet this incarnate image of his Maker was a man, whose honor the so fond idea of miraculous conception only stains, immaculate as his birth or begetting doubtless was. Are we all spotted because begotten and born? This *man* we Liberals in religion will not give up to any Romish, English, Congregational, or Episcopal monopoly. He is ours too. He belongs to Independent, Freethinker, and Dissenter, as much as to Orthodox or Presbyter.

Will the critic say that in all this I am speaking not of Jesus, but the *Christ* or *Messiah*, the predicted *Anointed* and *Sent* Jesus has been converted into,—a myth fashioned or constructed out of the real man? I answer, the transformation implies somewhat to be transformed, which we must give an account of. What sort and how much of a *man* did it take to make the sort and size of *myth*? A great shadow can be cast only by a great substance, as night is the shadow of the planet. All the worlds that roll and shine in the firmament exude their atmosphere from their solid stuff. Even the comet has a nucleus for its splendid tail athwart the sky. An actual rock or ship is lifted so grandly by the mirage. Other men — Abraham, Jeremiah, Washington, Lincoln — are, or are to be, myths, after their measure, in the love and reverence of mankind; and Jesus is no exception, save that his superior personality makes a wider and more lasting reflection, fetches a louder and sweeter echo from the human soul. So I say to the critic, Distinguish and discriminate his properties, and

give him, if you can, his true place in history, past or to come; but why belittle a great man? Are great men so plenty we can afford to throw them away? You do not try to belittle Homer, Shakspeare, Alfred, Milton, Cadmus the Phœnician, or Columbus the Genoese. You talk of Jesus as *disappearing!* You do not ask *them* to disappear; and he will not vanish from the mind's eye, go away from his followers' mortal sight, so long ago as he did, that he might not overpower or stand between and eclipse God. Free Religion, so called, will not displace Christianity, until, beyond notions and words, it show a higher than the Christian character. Fine persons will prevail over fine abstractions. I admire talents; but goodness is the greatest talent of all. Men may be radical, and also very low!

But, does one inquire, What is the Christian religion but a tradition taking the place of the fresh inspiration we need? I reply, Surely the same Spirit as of old lives and works and speaks. It is not dead or dumb. But our homage is for what it has been and done already. Our love of our race is for what it has been and done! In the boat of humanity, containing more than Noah's ark, we have arrived thus far on the stream of time. Could you cut off the stream behind, the boat would not go on, but go down by the stern. Only the flow far back, even from the eternal Fount, enables her, and us in her, to move on another inch: and we will not throw over the chief pilot still on board till we can pick up a better on the way; for he that steers and guides also feeds. I saw a cloud of hundreds on hundreds of sparrows yonder, and I marvelled what drew them so together on the street, till I saw one scattering crumbs from a doorway. Human creatures have assembled, and still meet, in the name of Jesus the Christ; for what reason, but that they have from his hand the bread of life? By a law of nourishment and sub-

sistence,—a law of individual and social and civilized man, however the critical and metaphysical observer in his watch-tower of lonely observation may fancy himself above it,—the condition of the race, from Russia to the United States, by this Christ-Ideal has been lifted and sustained, like the continents, by a central force of fire above the level of the sea: Jesus, in his humility, like a strong man stooping to raise a heavy weight, having taken hold of and elevated the world. As, when America or Europe rose from the primeval flood, all the shores and zones as one thing rose together, so mankind in all its tribes rises at once,—such a religion as ours being not the only exalting power, yet a main motive with the rest that co-operate. The critic says, the figure of Jesus has to be painfully *excavated* from the record of the past. But he will please excuse us from his digging; for to the Christian believer this great Leader is no buried statue, as on the Tiber or Po; and no fossil remain, but a living form, outlined with purity, instinct with love, and in a holy imagination moving and walking still, with no survivors that are too good or that need be too proud to follow in his steps. As to this past, whose annals we think so long, what is its memorial but a speck, a pin's point, in the geological and astronomical time of which no register remains? I profess to you that every so-called *ancient* worthy I read of, reflected in the mirror of my mind, appears not behind, but before me; and on the circle of the eternal dial One that was lowly and lordly at the head.

Long is the procession before and behind; long before, because it is long behind! He that cuts off his past cuts off his future. Christianity is not all! but it holds of the long future, because it holds of the long past; and anti-Christianity, rooted in a thin soil, is a fruitless tree. Humanity — that larger thing than any form of religion, yea, greatest of all we know after God — is no metaphysic phan-

tom or doctrinal phrase. As an entity, it is part of Divinity. As a sentiment, it is acknowledgment of what mankind is and has been ; and, in what human nature has accomplished or achieved, not the least has sprung and ripened from the Christian Faith.

Religion of nature! What but religion of the *Spirit* has unfolded and unveiled nature's face ? Because we are unspiritual, nature is not learned from and loved as she should be. So Wordsworth wrote :—

" Little we see in nature that is ours :
It moves us not. Great God ! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn ;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that might make me less forlorn,
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea,
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathed horn."

But this the critic calls mere *'sentimentalism.* Nay, he might as well so brand all poetry, and all nature in man or God. Rather it is true and pious owning of what is good, as a vital kernel in the worship of the past, out of which springs adoration for the present and coming time. Let us gather it up from the first lisp, when mankind as a child was learning to say its prayers, to the last articulation ; till heathen or Christian shrine or altar end in the " no temple," because all is temple in heaven !

FOURTH SERIES.]

[No. 20

GOD'S CHILDREN JUDGED BY WHAT THEY ARE.

BY JOHN C. KIMBALL.



AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

OUR FAITH.

*The Fatherhood of God.
The Brotherhood of Man.
The Leadership of Jesus.
Salvation by Character.
The Progress of Mankind,
 onward and upward forever.*

TYPICAL COVENANT OF A UNITARIAN CHURCH.

In the love of the truth, and the spirit of Jesus Christ, we unite for the worship of God and the service of man.

OUR DECLARATION

(As expressed in the *By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association*).

"The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity ; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose."

(As expressed by the *National Conference of Unitarian and Other Christian Churches, at Saratoga, N. Y., in 1894.*)

"These Churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God and love to man.

"The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test ; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims."

GOD'S CHILDREN JUDGED BY WHAT THEY ARE.

ONE evening, a short time ago, I had a conversation on this subject with a warm-hearted and pious lady of the Baptist Church. It began, I think, with her asking me if we Unitarians were going to hear Moody and Sankey, the next week, over in Boston ; and whether we did not expect and hope to be all converted. I told her that some of us were certainly going to hear them ; and that if they could convert us to any thing better than we are now,— which, indeed, there was room for,— we by all means hoped they would.

“ But,” said she, “ I thought you did not believe in their work ? ”

“ That is hardly a correct statement of it,” I answered. “ What we don’t believe in is their tools ; but their work, so far as it makes people more upright and spiritual-minded, we do — some of us, at least — believe in most heartily.”

“ What is the difference ? ” she asked. “ Don’t the character of a man’s tools and the character of his work inevitably go together ? ”

“ Not always. For instance, I know of a cabinet-maker, an old man of seventy, who works in a queer little shop with green, bull’s-eye glass windows, and without a single modern convenience. His bench is all hacked up ; his planes and chisels, worn almost down to the hilt ; his dividers and square, clumsy and inaccurate ; his lathe turns by hand, —

or rather, I ought to say, when I tried it, with two hands and the whole body. The odd corners of the place are stored away with broken-down specimens of the furniture in use a hundred years ago, and every thing is covered up thick with the dust of ages. And yet that old man, with those clumsy tools,—such is his inner skill,—turns out some of the most beautiful work you ever saw: joints that are absolutely perfect; dovetailing in which a microscope can hardly detect a flaw; and a finish and grace of line to every thing that, with the best tools in the market and all the appliances of modern machinery, his neighbor, a young man across the street, cannot begin to equal. Now, I don't believe in the old gentleman's tools,—anybody else without his wonderful skill would only make botches with them,—but I do believe in his work. So with Moody. His theological shop and tools are more than two hundred years old, dusty, out of true, worn down to the hilt, and surrounded with all manner of cast-aside enormities: but there is a genius in the man which enables him to take our common, rough humanity and turn out from it the products of religion,—some of them, certainly,—with a jointing and grace and thoroughness which put to shame the work of many of our modern churches, with all their wonders of ecclesiastical and theological machinery; and it is this work—though doubtless he spoils with his tools much stock—which I should be false to my own faith not to recognize and admire. Doctrines are good things in their way; and, with the light God has given me, I have to believe that those of Unitarianism are truer than those of Orthodoxy,—could not do any thing practically with those of Moody and Sankey. But doctrines, after all, are good only as things to use; and, if these two men can use theirs for the saving of souls better than they could any others, then I say, by all means let them use them. I am going to their meetings, not to get their tools or any imitation of them, but

to learn, if I can, how to wield my own to more advantage."

"Ah, well!" said she, solemnly: "their great tool of all is faith in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ,—salvation by his merits, and not our own; and you will never be able to do much for the world, whatever else you wield, till you get that. Why can't you accept him as Saviour, and preach him as such?"

"We do," I claimed,—"some of us; and it seems to me we do it in a far larger and more scriptural sense than Mr. Moody does,—take the whole Christ to be our Saviour, and not his blood alone; take 'the man Christ Jesus' to be our Mediator, as Paul tells us to, and not the Church's creed about his Deity. Some of us, as you know, have tried Mr. Moody's view of him, and for a while found it was good: but since then have tried the Bible view, and found that that was far better; have found that his atoning life and spirit are doing for us what the doctrine of his atoning blood never could."

"Well," said she, "my only hope is in his atoning blood; and I would not give it up for all else there is in this world."

The conversation after this went on from one thing to another, as such talks will, some of its parts quite light and trivial, and yet with a subtle thread of association between them which I cannot now recall, till we got to speaking about the dead of the year just closed, and especially about a deceased friend who had been very dear to us both.

"I have some faith," said I; "but, O Ura, I do wish I could look behind the veil just for one moment, and know by sight how and where she is and what she is doing!"

"I am perfectly satisfied," she answered; "for I know God will judge her for just exactly what she is, and that is all I could ask."

"What is that?" I exclaimed, looking up with a little affected astonishment. "Won't you please say those words again?"

"Why," she repeated, slowly, and with some wonderment, "I believe God will judge her for just exactly what she is. It is what I believe in regard to everybody, that He who is Infinite Goodness and Infinite Justice will judge us according to our true selves,—not expect more of us than with our imperfections we can really do; not look at the outside, or at our blunders alone, or make any mistakes about us, or be any harsher to us than is for our best good. It is a thought which always has been my great hope both for myself and for everybody else."

"Amen, amen! Why, Urania, that is the rankest kind of Unitarianism: embodies two—yes, three—of our great fundamental doctrines."

"How do you make that out?"

"Plain enough. First, it means that a person is saved by what he really is, not by what somebody else has done for him; second, that our human nature is not altogether depraved, but has some good elements in it which God, in His judgment of us, will recognize; and, third, that if we are punished by Him, it will be not out of wrath, but for our own further reformation."

"Well," she replied, "I don't care what name it goes under: I believe it with all my heart, and always have. Many and many a time I have thought about it, as one and another have been taken away; and, amid all doubts and perplexities, I always fall back on the same thing for my comfort,—that they all are in the hands of a Good Being, who will do for them exactly what is right."

"I believe so, too; but, Ura, how does what you say about this hold with what you told me a little while ago — that our only hope of salvation is through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ?"

"I don't know. Do you see any inconsistency between them?"

"Yes, a very great one. When we go to hear Mr. Moody, his fundamental doctrine, unless he should be very much pro-moralized by Boston atmosphere, will be, as you said, salvation by faith in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. Now, what does this mean? Why, it means that God will not judge us at all for what we are in ourselves, otherwise than to condemn us; but only by whether we have accepted, in the place of our own righteousness, the merits of a crucified Redeemer. Mr. Moody says — at least, he did say in New York — that 'outside of Christ there is no difference in the Divine sight between the worst and the best of men,' — the very opposite, certainly, of having each one judged for himself; that 'a man with his own righteousness cannot stand for a single moment before God'; that 'it is not the strongest or the noblest, or those with the best characters, that are safe, but those who are behind the blood'; that 'the man who hasn't got the token of the blood, I don't care what his life or his character may be, is unsafe and unsaved'; and that 'there is no other way of salvation than by the blood of Christ.' He uses the comparison of a man with a railroad ticket. When the conductor comes along, he does not ask what the passenger is himself, — whether a good man or a bad man; does not care whether he is the purest saint or the vilest wretch on earth. He only asks if he has got his ticket; and, if that is all right, he is bound to let him through. So with man before God. The ticket is faith in the blood of Christ. If he hasn't got that, there is no virtue of his own that can let him into heaven; and, if he has, there is no vice of his own that can keep him out.* It is not everybody who puts the matter quite so strongly as Mr. Moody does; but

* See especially "The Sermon on the Blood," as printed in the "New York Tribune" for March 8, 1876

the vital point of this doctrine of the blood is the same everywhere,—that people are to be judged in the last day, not by what they are in themselves,—for their own nature, any way, is totally depraved, and is condemned already,—but by what they are in relation to Jesus Christ. How often have we, both of us, heard it preached, that, when we stand before the bar of God, the question will not be, *Have you been honest?* *Have you been meek and merciful, and pure in heart?* *Have you been a good parent, a good child, a good citizen, a good neighbor, a good man?* But the sole inquiry will be, *Have you put your trust in Jesus Christ?* And, if you can't answer this affirmatively, your sentence will be, ‘Depart from me into the lake of everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels.’ *Isn’t it so?*”

“Yes: that is the doctrine,” she answered. “Our own righteousness, we are told, is nothing but filthy rags; and I suppose that is the truth. But what I meant by judging *us* as we are is, not that He will save us through our own goodness; but that He will be merciful to us, and, in making up our account, will take into consideration how little we have to start with, and all our trials and temptations,—do by his children just as I would by one of mine. It would be a fearful thing if we had only the law of absolute justice to appeal to,—no Saviour to be a propitiation for our sins.”

“I don’t know about that,” said I: “there are many Christians who are more afraid of tripping up somehow on this wonderful theological contrivance for avoiding the penalties of the Divine Justice, than they would be of throwing themselves into the arms of that Justice itself. Look at your own sister. She often tells me that, when a girl and exercised about the salvation of her soul, her great terror used to be as to how she should comply with the conditions of the atonement. ‘If God would only be fair with

me,' she used to say to herself, 'I wouldn't care. I would be glad to have Him punish me all I deserved for my sins, if He would only give me credit for when I tried to be good. But the idea that nothing I could do, whether good or bad, could make any difference about my salvation,—that is what used to fill me with despair.' It is a feeling which is experienced by multitudes of others. The fact is, Ura, this doctrine of salvation by the merits of Jesus Christ is inconsistent every way with your idea of being judged for what you are. Don't you see that it is ? "

" Well, you confuse me for a moment by the way you put it, and make it seem so; but"—

" No, I don't confuse you: I only clear the thing up by setting the two doctrines side by side with each other, and enabling you with your own eyes to see their discrepancy."

" At any rate, discrepant or not, I believe them both. I hope to be saved by the merits of Jesus Christ. It is the faith in which I was converted, and which brought me unutterable peace; and nothing can ever make me give it up. At the same time, I believe, somehow, that God is so good and all-knowing that He will judge all his children for what they are, whether Christians or not. This, too, is my great comfort over the departed,— those especially who have died out of Christ; and I never, never will give that up either. I never had any of those theological difficulties Emily tells about."

" Exactly," said I: " you believe them both,— the one, with your mind as a doctrine of theology; the other, with your heart as a part of your inborn faith. And the one you believe with your mind is Orthodoxy, and the one you believe with your heart is Unitarianism. That is the way it is with a great many people, women especially, with reference to a great many doctrines. They are Orthodox with their minds,— Orthodox in their creeds, professions, and church membership,— Orthodox in the explanations

of their faith ; but in their hearts and lives and instincts, in their faith itself, and in those great interior sources of comfort to which, in their deepest trials, they always fall back,—in all these they are utterly Unitarian. If their hearts and minds are in equilibrium, or are not brought into too close comparison with each other, they enjoy a certain kind of peace. But if one is the strongest, or from any cause the most active, then come doubt, struggle, darkness, lasting till one or the other has been subdued. What many persons call ‘conversion’ is simply the attainment of the supremacy of the outer over the inner faith ; what they call the ‘resistance of their rebellious natures to the call of the Spirit,’ only the convulsive, gasping struggles of the instincts of the heart God implanted, before they are made to yield to the domination of a superimposed theology.”

Just then the clock struck twelve. Our conversation took place in the sitting-room, standing on each side of the stove ; the house utensils, the day’s folded work, and the children’s playthings all around us.

“There !” she exclaimed ; “if you are going to Salem with me to-morrow morning, it is time you were abed. Good-night, and remember all you have said hasn’t converted me from my Orthodoxy one hair’s-breadth.”

The next morning we were both riding down to Salem, together, in the cars to see a sick friend. The bright snow and the splendid winter’s landscape were enough to fill our thoughts wholly, and for a while keep us in silence. At length other matters came up, and I remarked : “Urania, I have been thinking over our talk last night.”

“So have I,” she answered ; “and trying to unravel my two beliefs, as you call them, and make them consistent to myself. To tell you the truth, I don’t succeed very well. But I was just going to ask you one question.”

“What is it ? Ask away.”

" Well, you say you Unitarians—some of you at least—believe in Christ as a Saviour; and believe also, as I do, that God will judge his children for what they are, whether they are professed Christians or not. How, then, is Christ a Saviour; and how, on your ground, do you reconcile the two things together? "

" I am glad you ask the question, and will try to explain. We hold Christ saves us from our sins, not by his being punished for them in our stead, and then by our acceptance of his imputed merits; * but by his calling us to repentance, and helping us to get rid of them: just as a wise physician saves us from sickness, not by taking our diseases on his own person and giving to us his health, but by his medicines and wise counsel,—believe that he redeems us by leading us to become, in the very substance of our own souls, nobler and truer men and women. There is some good in all human beings, even in the poorest heathen and the vilest criminals; and God gives them credit for it,—all the more, perhaps, just because they have never heard of Christ, and because He takes in, as no earthly judge can, all their circumstances. Now, Christ comes as our Saviour, not to cast aside and throw contempt on this natural goodness, and to put his own merits in its place, as Mr. Moody preaches; but to nourish and stimulate and develop it in a thousand ways: so that,

* Rev. Mr. Cook defends this doctrine of substitution as he does many others, by giving it up; says "chastised" instead of punished, as if the use of the word "punishment" was a Liberal misrepresentation of Orthodoxy; and denies that there is any such thing as the transference of merit and demerit from one person to another. What is referred to above, however, is beyond question the authorized view. The "Westminster Confession of Faith" declares (Chap. VII.): "He underwent the *punishment* due to us, being made a sin and curse for us." Spurgeon puts it, "The whole gospel is wrapped up in one word, 'substitution.' The only reason why I should not be damned is that Christ was *punished* in my stead." And, not to go back too far, Mr. Moody himself preaches, "There is no sense in the sacred history of the Atonement unless our sins have been transferred to another and put away; all we have to do is to turn our sins over to Christ."

under the fullest Christianity, it is still true that God judges us by what we are ourselves. In the one view, it is his 'imputed righteousness' by which we are saved; in the other view, a real righteousness: in the one case, a garment or robe which is put on over our own vile natures; in the other case, the growth of our whole inner selves, the very substance of our being, into what is Christlike and good. Which way do you think is the most solid and real, the most worthy of God and Christ? Which the kind you would wish for yourself, and would rather judge another person by? Take your own little Emma. She is just learning to write. Now, suppose she comes home, some day, bringing her copy-book all filled with a child's scrawls. The letters are of the simplest kind; the words, all out of proportion,—not a graceful line among them; and here and there the dear little fingers have got into the ink themselves, and left very decided blots over the page. Nevertheless, with all its poorness, she has done it herself; and it is her very best. Now, wouldn't you rather have her bring home that scrawl, which is her own, than have her come with the finest copy-book ever made, which had been all written out for her by her teacher, and which she had done nothing but accept in the place of her own?"

"Why, of course I should; any mother would."

"Well, in the one case, you see, it would be imputed writing, and in the other case her own childish work: and, though it was so poor, you would remember a child did it, and your own child; and, as you say, you would judge her for what she was. And that is just the way, I believe, it is with God, when His children carry home to Him at last the handwriting of their human lives. It may, indeed, be a poor scrawl; may, indeed, be, with that page of character on which it is written, all covered over with the blots of sin; may, indeed, be vastly inferior to the copy which is set us by the great teacher, Jesus Christ. But it will be our own;

and God will judge it by our poor human ability, not by what Christ is; and would, I believe, ten thousand times rather see the humblest scrawl we make ourselves, than any degree of perfection which had merely been transferred to us, were such a thing possible, from Jesus Christ."

"Oh, well! that illustration is very good of a nice little girl, like Emma, who does her very best. But the trouble is, we don't any of us do our best; and that is what makes sin. Suppose that, instead of Emma, it was a great, mischievous, idle boy came home at night, bringing a writing-book that he had blotted in mere sport, and marked over with all sorts of ugly pictures,—which is the real case with many persons,—would his mother be at all glad to see that? Now, I think, I have caught you."

"Not quite," said I: "it is an illustration which makes my point all the stronger. Take such a boy, who had wasted his whole day in play and mischief, and whose book was all filled with blots and strange devices. Suppose that, when night comes, he should feel sorry, and his teacher in pity should give him a new book, written out by herself, to carry home to his mother as his own,—just as good a one as his diligent little sister received who had done her best,—would you say there was any wisdom or fairness in it? Would not you, if you were the boy's mother, much prefer that he should be sent home with his own book just as it was, so that he might be properly punished for his naughtiness, and made another day to do better? Wouldn't it be better for the boy himself, even in this worst case, to have him judged for exactly what he was, rather than to have him let off through the merits of his teacher?"

"Well, if you put it so, I suppose I must say yes."

"So with the Great Parent. When His children have done badly, not only His wisdom and justice, but their own highest good, demand that, instead of being sent home

covered over with the robe of Christ's righteousness, they should go to Him exactly as they are, and receive the punishment that in the other great life-day will make them do better. Why, Ura, I don't want to be harsh ; but truly it seems to me, this famous doctrine of being saved by imputed righteousness is one of the unfairest to God and most injurious to man of any thing which even theology has ever devised."

"Do you think, then, that all Mr. Moody's converts and all we Orthodox people have only an assumed righteousness which is very bad for us, and that you Unitarians alone are possessed of the genuine article ?"

"No: God forbid. We are conceited enough, I acknowledge, in all conscience ; but we haven't got quite so far as that. It is a matter where the principle I spoke of last night comes in. What all Christians are at heart seeking for and getting, and hoping at last to be judged by, is real righteousness. It is only as a theory, only with their minds, that they expect to be saved by any robe of another's merits. The grand, native instincts of the soul,—that inborn hunger and thirst after righteousness of which Christ speaks, and which can no more be fed with the imputed article than a child can with imputed milk,—these are continually asserting themselves, and, in spite of all theology, prompting men to lay hold of the real substance. Take Mr. Moody himself. Nine-tenths, I suppose, of all his preaching is the enforcement of those things which make up real righteousness ; such as honesty, purity, temperance, repentance, charity, restitution, spiritual life. It is in this part of his work that we Unitarians sympathize with him heart and soul. There is nothing else that ever sticks. When he finishes in Boston, as you will see, all his converts who get this real thing, all who are so converted that they will want to have God judge them for what they are, will become permanent Christians ; and all others, all

who actually put their trust solely in what has been done for them by another,— the same here as in England, and in every other place where he has preached,— will fall away."

"Do you think that such a view is the real Scripture doctrine?"

"Of course I do. Even old Hebrew David, with all his faults, could sing, 'Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me.' Those words don't sound much like regarding his own righteousness as filthy rags, do they? And again: 'He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust:' 'With righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with equity.' Christ tells us that the tree is known by its fruits ; its own fruits, mind you, not those which have been put on it from some other tree: says the pure in heart shall see God, not those who have had somebody else pure in heart for them: gives us the parable of the talents, where each servant is required to double his Lord's money, not hide it away in the earth as of no value,— a most beautiful illustration of this principle on which each one is to be judged ; and declares expressly that, of him to whom much is given, much will be required. Peter opened his mouth, and preached that in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of Him. Paul writes that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord ; and, though he speaks often against trusting in the righteousness which is of the Law — that is, a formal, technical righteousness, — he advocates, with no end of zeal, that deeper righteousness, the real thing, which is of the soul through Christ. And the Apostle John"—

Here we reached Salem, and the car-brakes put an end at once to our journey, and to the long train of quotations I was getting ready to pour out; so that our conversation

had that incompleteness which belongs to every thing in real life. If the ride had been ten miles longer, however, I should have finished up by saying (in true ministerial style), that the doctrine of God's judging us for what we are is not only scriptural, but also exceedingly practical,— one of those doctrines which bears with real force on human life. It is full of warning, and stimulus for every person to do his very best,— make of his inner self all that he possibly can, not, indeed, by working on it directly, but by work for others. No professions, no sacred words, no compliance with mere rites and forms, none of the appearances which deceive men, no wealth or rank or fame, nothing but the genuine substance of worth and character, will be of any avail. And, on the other hand, for the weak and lowly ones of God's children, it is full of comfort and sweetest hope. There is no absolute standard He has fixed for them to attain,— no precise height without reaching which their souls are lost. He takes in their whole condition in life,— what they are to start with, what their talents (whether one or two or five); takes in, as no human judge can, all their weaknesses, temptations, and trials, all their efforts and aims; and then He judges them for all they are,— gives them credit for every littlest grace, every cup of cold water that is given, even to a little child, in the name of a disciple: does it all out of a Father's heart; does it all, even when he condemns what is wrong, for the sake at last of their own truest good. Who is willing to give up such a faith — a faith so natural, so just, so wide-reaching — for any device, however plausible, which theology has to offer? A revival may come,— God grant it may!— but its best result will be the revival in all hearts of this old, despised, inborn truth, the offspring alike of the Divine Justice and the Divine Mercy, that God will judge his children for what they are.

FOURTH SERIES.]

[No. 21.

O U R
COMMON CHRISTIANITY

BY

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

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FORM OF BEQUEST.

I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of dollars.

OUR COMMON CHRISTIANITY

IN the incidental remarks at opening, Dean Stanley said :—

There is such a thing as Christianity common to all the various churches of Christendom. There are common elements in our faith which may be found, if not in the actual practices and doctrines of the several churches, at any rate in the original documents to which they all appeal.

And then continued :—

We are wandering to and fro in the labyrinths of our various churches and sects. What I propose to do is not to compare doctrine with doctrine, or institution with institution, although that might be a very interesting and instructive task, and might, perhaps, lead to the same result. But what I propose to do is to endeavor to penetrate, if possible, behind the forms and doctrines of the outward ordinances of Christendom, and to ask what are the inward principles which give them paramount value; what are the essential supernatural elements of Christianity which are above the assaults of criticism, above the turmoil of the world, because above the level of our ordinary carnal, earthly nature. If we can arrive, in ever so rough and imperfect a measure, at those fundamental principles, we shall then be in a better position to understand what it is that gives a peculiar glory to our common faith.

We will endeavor, then, to answer this question as briefly and as plainly as we can. Let us only observe, first of all, that there are many principles in Christianity which it shares with other religions, and which, therefore, we cannot truly enumerate among its direct results. The unity of God, for example, which is one of the most important of all religious principles, was known to the Jewish people long before the Christian era. It assumed a new form of life; but it was still from Abraham, or at least from Moses, that we first received it. Again, the immortality of the soul was and is a truth which the psalmists in their highest moods had reached, which the Egyptian and Grecian priests and philosophers had accepted. He who was the Light of the world turned, indeed, the full rays of His lamp upon it, and revealed, as you see, its inner meaning; but the principle had already been received, and He illuminated and explained rather than expressly discovered it. But there are some principles which were so little known, or which existed in such feeble rudiments, before Christianity, that practically they were not known at all. Let us, in plain words, try to state what those principles are. Some of them, through the influence of Christianity, have become so familiar to us that we shall, perhaps, be startled to hear them named as among its peculiar products. Some are even now so strange, so little recognized, that it may be almost difficult for us to acknowledge that they are Christian at all.

First, There is the principle of the universal benevolence of the Supreme Ruler of the universe, which is expressed in the words "Father," "Our Father," to believe that the relation of the Supreme Mind to man is that of a father. No doubt the word in relation to the Deity was known before, both in Jewish and heathen times; but it was not manifest, it was not brought to the front of religion as it was by Christianity. In the Old Testament it is used two

or three times; but in the New Testament it is used two hundred times. It is the mode in which the Supreme Ruler is expressed throughout the Gospels. It is the name by which He is called in the form of devotion furnished in the New Testament. The Lord's Prayer, or, as it is called in Latin, the *Pater Noster*, teaches us these two things: That the Supreme Governor of the world, like a father, is careful of his earthly children; and,

Secondly, that there is not only a universal Deity, but a common humanity; in other words, there is something in every race of man which attracts the divine good-will towards them. In the old heathen religions, each country had its own deity, each deity had his own country,—gods of Troy, gods of Greece, gods of Rome; and in the Jewish religion God for a long time was regarded only as the God of the people of Israel: but with Christianity all this was changed. The truth of the universality of God's care for man, and of the universality of a capacity for true religion in man, was known in some degree to some of the Jewish prophets; and it was expressed in one striking sentence by Alexander the Great, when he said, "God is the common father of all men, especially of the best men." But it was placed in the forefront of the Jewish doctrine only when Christianity was revealed. Read the description of the Judgment in the twenty-fifth chapter of St. Matthew, and also the second chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. The supreme object of our worship was now known as the God, not of Judaism only, not of Christianity only, but of all good men,—and, as far as there is any goodness in them, of all men throughout the world.

Thirdly, It is a truth running parallel with this, that in the Christian dispensation morality is religion, and religion, morality; or that religion is the sanctification of morality, and morality is the action of religion. This

great principle had, no doubt, been foreshadowed by the warning of the Jewish prophets, and by Grecian philosophers and poets ; but it was through the first teaching of Christianity that it assumed paramount importance. However much in the various churches correct opinion, or correct ceremonial, or decoration of churches, or venerations of priesthood and ecclesiastical independence, have taken the place of morality, and however enormous the crimes which have been perpetrated in the name of religion have been, still the better and wiser spirits of every age of Christendom have recognized the fact that the original principles of our faith teach exactly the reverse. Read the description in the beatitudes of those that are truly happy, read the two great commandments, read the twelfth and thirteenth chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, read the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians,—and you will see how, in each original conception of Christianity, the moral elements of religion outweigh all others.

Fourthly, It is the goodness thus made most essential in the religious man, and in man altogether, which gives us the best conception of God. This principle no doubt existed in some degree in heathen religion, and to a large degree in the Jewish ; but in the former it was liable to constant obscuration. The Homeric divinities, as a general rule, were not better, but worse, than the Homeric heroes ; the description of God in the Old Testament, again, was often too far removed from human thought, represented to us in the form of human goodness ; but the Christian idea of God was that it is the perfection of virtue and wisdom. God is love ; God is light ; and when to this we add that the Founder of our religion is set before us, not only as an example of humanity, but as the representation and personification of divinity, this truth

concerning the moral nature of the divine essence attains that vividness and power which has never been reached in any other faith. In all these theories, if not equal, at any rate in a predominant and impressive form, the chief, Supreme Ruler is set before us as a mirror in which we see the perfection of the Deity. The more human the representation of His virtues, the more we feel Him to be divine. The more attractive and persuasive to all our moral convictions, so much the more we feel that He has disclosed to us the secret of Him whom no man hath seen or can see.

But, fifthly, it is not enough that there should be this general identification of morality with religion, or of this perfect human goodness with the Divine nature. We have to ask, What are the special points of goodness on which Christianity lays the chief stress? The chief virtues of Greek morality were fortitude, wisdom, self-control, and justice; of the ancient Roman religion, patriotism and imperial courage; of the Hebrew religion, resignation, reverence, and faith. All these several virtues have their places in Christianity; but there are other moral gifts which shine with the most transcendent glory in the New Testament. The main characteristics of the Founder of our religion and of His disciples are kindness, universal kindness and beneficence, to which is given the new name of grace, love, or charity; purity in word and deed, to which is given the new name of holiness, or consecration to God; truthfulness and absolute sincerity, to which the very word became a synonyme of the Founder's life; humility and lowliness, for which neither Greek nor Latin had any adequate expression;—these were the principles which, in the Epistles, were deemed to be essentially Christian, and which were called divine.

Sixthly, There is the method by which these qualities, whether in God or man, were to be propagated and ex-

tended in the world. One is the process which regards the individual himself: it is self-abnegation; that is, the constant sacrifice of the lower part of his nature to the highest and best. In every one of us there is this higher and this lower nature. It is for the disciples of Christianity to find out, to endeavor to find out, what is the better part that is the one thing needful; and for this a transformation, a transfiguration, and a regeneration of the soul, is necessary; the constant renunciation of that which is behind; the perpetual reaching forward to that which is before; the noble ambition which is satisfied with nothing less than the highest ideal. This sense of the need of an endless moral renovation and progress, this dissatisfaction with the littleness and meanness of things earthly and commonplace, and striving after things above us,—that is what is called in the New Testament by many names, all meaning the same thing,—conversion, repentance, the second birth, the cross, the grave, the resurrection, the new life, a spiritual mind. Of this, heathen moralists speak but little,—even the Jewish psalmists and prophets only in their loftiest flights. But of this the New Testament is full. It is the forgiveness of sins, of which the most consummate picture is given in the story of the Prodigal Son; it is that which is described with a peculiar metaphor throughout the Epistles by the word edification, which means building up one story above another; and that is the new heaven and the new earth which in figure and imagery fills the visions of the Apocalypse.

This leads us, seventhly, to the mode of looking at our fellow-men, and the judgment we are to pronounce upon them. It may be called the method, the judgment, of surprises. The principle of the New Testament is that the characters of those of whom we should least expect a great future are those in whom we shall sometimes most

surely find it. The irregular and despised publican often comes before the correct Pharisee ; the generous prodigal, before the complacent elder brother ; the repentant Magdalene, before the supercilious host ; the outcast heathen and heretical Samaritan, before the orthodox Jew : the first last, and the last first. On this widely ramifying experience, which cuts across the grain of so many commonplace prejudices, both of the ancient and modern world, is built the whole life of the friend of sinners, the shepherd of the lost sheep, the leader of the Christian chivalry, the champion of the weak, the defender of the oppressed, the refuge of the helpless. In it is contained, so to speak, the romance, the poetry, of the gospel. This it is which makes it especially a gospel to the poor even more than the rich, the gospel to the Gentile even more than to the Jew, the gospel to little children even more than to theologians. The gospel may sometimes say to the heathen and misbeliever even more than to the Christian. This is not the way of other religions ; this has often not been the way of the Christian religion ; but it was in the beginning, and may yet in the end, be the way of the religion of Jesus Christ.

Eighthly, This leads us to yet another kindred principle. It is that which is held with such amazing tenacity by the gifted person lately withdrawn from among us, — Charles Kingsley ; the doctrine, namely, that the whole world is God's world, and not the Devil's. There were moments when this was taught both by Hebrew and by Greek ; but it was held by Christians, for the gospel set it forth in its most commanding and persuasive form. Alone of the founders of religions, our Founder was no hermit, no ascetic, no visionary, no armed soldier. He lived a social, happy life with the sons and daughters of men : eating and drinking, delighting in the merry faces of little children, considering the lilies of the field and the

birds of the air ; making no distinction, except for the sake of tender scruples, between Christian and heathen, between the world and the Church ; and as he was in his life, so were his first followers in their teaching,— that of all created things, which God had cleansed, there was not one that Peter was allowed to call common or unclean. Among all the institutions of the earth, there is none which Paul regards with so much reverential awe as the laws of the ancient Roman empire. Among all the predictions of St. John, none is more majestic than that which declares that the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of the Lord and of his Christ. The identification of things secular with things sacred, the refusal to acknowledge any thing as supremely sacred except what is good, or profane except what is sinful,— this is the wide-reaching principle of the gospel which strikes at the root of a thousand superstitions, and is the fruitful source of a thousand truths. It carries with it the hope of the final triumph of good over evil. It carries with it the germ of all modern philosophy, modern art and statesmanship. This is the element which liberates, redeems, and purifies both the Church and the world.

Along with this there is, ninthly, the principle that the darkest and dreariest side of human life has also a glorious and divine aspect : sorrow, suffering, pain, and death,— all those evils of which the existence and the very thought shake the faith and try the patience, and over-cloud the serenity, even of the best, and which in Jewish and in Pagan religions were for the most part regarded as curses and penalties, as signs of wrath, as works of the Devil,— all these are in the gospel transformed and transfigured so as to be represented, if not as blessings, yet at least as the channels of blessings, if not as direct gifts of divine love, yet as opportunities for working out the purposes of that divine love to the human race. The rude

manger of Bethlehem, the reproaches of Nazareth, the hardships of Capernaum, the tears of Bethany, the cross of Calvary, all concentrate in one focus what the great German poet Goethe called the divine depth of sorrow,—out of which, as out of all sorrow and pain, is to be wrought the improvement, the redemption, the regeneration, the purification, of mankind. Contrast the Prometheus of Æschylus, contrast the riddle of the book of Job, with the unhesitating, unswerving termination of the gospel story,—the glorified humiliation of bereavement and grief. This is the peculiarity of Christianity, which was but seen afar off by Hebrew prophet or Grecian seer; but which, even in the worst corruptions of Christian faith, has retained its hold on the human spirit.

This leads me, tently, to this principle, that religion, as viewed by Christianity, is spiritual; that it depends not on material or formal or technical questions of any kind, but on its connection with the invisible spirit of man, with the invisible spirit of God. Hence the definition that God is a spirit, and that his true worship is in the spirit; hence the constant use of parables in our Savior's teaching, that we might always be taught to turn from the letter to the spirit,—to remember that the spirit, even in all sacred writings, is greater than the letter; hence the absence of any form of ritual, or any form of government, prescribed in the New Testament; hence the persistent command to look from the outward to the inward, from the outside to the inside, from the act to the motive, from external, particular words and deeds to the character as a whole, from the things which are seen to the things which are unseen, from the sufferings which are but for the moment to the eternal which belongs to all time and all space. It is not that the acts and graces and courtesies of life are of no value. Yes, they are of value; but their value is as nothing compared with a high, honorable, upright course

of life. It is not that the splendor of worship or the simplicity of worship, the excellence of music or the beauty of architecture, have no attraction for the truly Christian mind. Yes, they have much attraction ; but compared with matters of duty,—compared with charity, forbearance, humility, and truth,—they have in the judgment of the supreme God very slight attraction, indeed. Hence, again, the new light thrown by Christianity, as I said at the outset, on the doctrine of immortality, the new solution of the perplexing difficulties concerning a future state,—the principle, namely, that it rests on spiritual communion with the Eternal. The silence concerning all details, combined with the clearness of conviction which pervades the New Testament on the divine existence of the spirit after death, is the crowning consolation that we have won from the evangelic and apostolic account of the resurrection and of heaven.

These, then, are the ten chief inward principles which lie behind all the facts, institutions, and history of Christianity ; which would not, so far as we know, have struck root in the world at all but for the coming of Christianity ; and which, wherever they are found bearing fruit, constitute a Christian, whatever be the outward profession ; which, wherever they are not found, cause a failure, a falling short of the privileges and the hope, the consolations, of Christianity. These ten principles, let me, for the sake of clearness, briefly repeat. They are,—firstly, the universal benevolence of God as our Father ; secondly, the universal capacity for religion in mankind as His children ; thirdly, religion is the sanctification of morality, and morality is the action of religion ; fourthly, the identification of moral goodness with the divine nature ; fifthly, the supreme importance of charity, purity, truth, and humility ; sixthly, the necessity and the possibility of continued progress, both in the individual and in the race ; seventhly

the reversal of the superficial judgments of the world; eighthly, the identification of things secular and things sacred; ninthly, the divinity of sorrow and suffering; and, tenthly, the spiritual character of real religion, both in worship and in doctrine.

There are three observations which I have to make on the enumeration of these principles, before I conclude.

First, I would wish to impress upon you that the enforcement of these principles does not supersede or conflict with any of the various doctrines or institutions which any of us, in our several sects or churches, may have learned in childhood, manhood, or old age. No. What I wish you to understand is, that these principles lie behind and above those mere technical and outward manifestations of religion. Turn them, if you like, into other phrases. Clothe them, if you will, in more ordinary forms of speech. The words I have used to express them are perhaps not better — perhaps are worse — than those which others may choose for themselves. At any rate, they may serve as touchstones to enable us to know whether we have really grasped the faith which we all believe that we have in common; or whether we are merely repeating words by rote, and contenting ourselves with the husks and shells, with the beggarly elements of Judaism and heathenism. Somewhere or other, in our conception of Christianity, we must find room for these fundamental principles; or else we shall have missed some of the main purposes for which Christianity was given to us.

Secondly, perchance to some of us the thought that these ten principles, or something like these ten principles, are among the chief products of our religion, may give us a new ground for the hope that is in us, — a pledge that the Christian religion is not dead or dying, but is still instinct with immortal life. No doubt, the human intellect and the human conscience do themselves oc-

casionally suffer relapses. The supply of lofty souls and great intelligences may sometimes dwindle, peak and pine. And, with that decay, those privileges which we have enumerated may for a time decay also. But there is an inextinguishable source of life in the very width and depth of their nature; and that, even if they should for a time be forced out of and beyond the Christian pale, they will strike root elsewhere, and that as they were the Alpha, or beginning, of the education of Christendom, so also they will be the Omega, its end. They form, indeed, the tissue of the common Christianity of which we speak. And this common Christianity, so viewed, is certainly, at least as definite, precise, and intelligible as any of the special forms in which it has been clothed: for it is the Christianity of little children, and of the very poor; it is the Christianity of the greatest philosophers; it is the Christianity of States and statesmen.

There is, finally, thus a supreme stimulus to our hope, that these principles, of which I have been speaking to you, incontestably made their way, not by being enunciated as dry and formal statements, nor by outward authority, nor by the sword of conquerors, but by being personified, exemplified, made flesh and blood in Him who was manifested on earth in these very things; that it is this living, personal interest which gave them their first chance, and which has ever since maintained their universal capability of application. You may remember, some of you, those fine lines of the Poet Laureate, in his "In Memoriam":—

" We yield all blessing to the name
Of Him that made them current coin :

" For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
Where truth in closest words shall fail,
When truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

"And so the Word had breath ; and wrought
With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought."

Yes ; and the poet might have added, more strong than all philosophic or theologic thought. Christianity is what it is by the fact that there once lived upon earth a sacred and divine life,—sacred and divine because it was supremely, superhumanly, and transcendently good ; because it was above the limitations of time, country, and party ; because it revealed to mankind the fullest insight ever given into the heart of the Eternal and Supreme : and Christianity shall be what it may yet become, in proportion as that life, or any thing like it, is lived over again in personal example and influence of any human spirit that aspires towards that perfect ideal.

I was much struck this afternoon by an extract which Mr. Oakley read from one of the earliest inspectors of schools in England. "As I go," he says, "from school to school, I perceive in each a distinctive character, which is that of the master. I look at the school and I look at the master, and there is no mistaking the resemblance : his idiosyncrasy has passed upon the school. I seem to see him reflected in the children as in so many fragments of a broken mirror." Yes, it is perfectly true with regard to masters in schools. I know it myself. I remember, when engaged in education at Oxford, we tutors of the different colleges used to look with the utmost interest at the different types of character and intelligence impressed upon the scholars who came from our different public schools. I remember how this type penetrated even into details ; how the sagacious observer of character at one of the colleges said, on seeing the original handwriting of the greatest public teacher in this century, "That is the handwriting which I have seen in a hundred different forms

in the handwriting of all the scholars that came from Rugby."

Now it is this power of impressing our own characters on others which is especially given to school-masters and school-mistresses of any institution ; it is the power which is their greatest privilege and their greatest responsibility. It is also the best illustration,— with all reverence be it spoken,— the best of the illustrations and the effect produced on the world by the Founder of our common Christianity, and also of our relations towards him. Whenever any trait of justice, or generosity, or far-sighted wisdom, or wide tolerance, or compassion, or purity, is seen in any man or woman throughout the whole human race, there, as in the fragments of a broken mirror, we see the reflection of the Divine image. There we see, as in the various characters of a manifold handwriting, the letters, the turns, the spirit of the character of his hand. If, in the effect produced among us on any single human will, we see any one of the principles which I have endeavored to describe ; if we see truthfulness, if we see graciousness, if we see perception, the keen perception of the true needs of his or her time or situation ; if in the effect on the world, if even in a few instances, some such boy or girl, some such man or woman, were planted in any neighborhood, in any nation, in any church,— would not definite, precise, unmistakable evidence be seen of the principles of our common Christianity, because it would express the incontestable features, the unquestionable characteristics of our common Master ?

FOURTH SERIES.]

[No. 22

TWO STORIES OF THE KING

BY

CHARLES F. DOLE.



AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

BOSTON.

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TWO STORIES OF THE KING.

THE first story, as I used to hear it, was as follows :—

There was once a king who had absolute power over his subjects. This king had a young prince and a splendid court of attendants. It seemed to him good, however, to have more attendants about himself and the prince. He accordingly took this singular measure to secure them. He established a school in one of the districts of the kingdom, and into this school he gathered all the children who lived in the district. They had no choice but to come in. He made very strict laws for the school; some of them written and some of them not written at all. He gave all the children one term of trial; and he promised that whoever kept all the laws for this term should be promoted to a place in the royal court. But whoever broke one of these laws should lose his chance of promotion; and not only that, but he should be whipped for every offence. And, as though it was not enough for the children to lose their chance of promotion and be whipped besides, as often as they did wrong; this king added one further threat, that all the children who failed of promotion should be sent, after their term closed, to a distant and terrible dungeon, and confined there in torment with the worst criminals as long as their miserable lives lasted.

It was also said that the king left the school the first term to be managed by the oldest boy who lived in the

district ; and that, if he had managed it right, no one of the rest would ever have done wrong ; but that, if he made a single mistake, the school was sure to go wrong ever after. And the king let a very bad man into the school, who persuaded this oldest boy to disobey, and so evil was started in the school. (This seems to me so unlikely, however, that I cannot think it belongs to the original story.)

Now, it happened just as you would naturally expect with this singular school. Some of the children came very ignorant, some were sick, some were born of degraded parents ; the school was full of temptations ; and, out of thousands who spent a term in it, and during many years in which it was kept, nobody ever succeeded in fulfilling its conditions. The king, however, wanted attendants at his court, and every term he was supposed to have taken some children to his capital,—mostly from one family : all the multitude of the rest were sent to the terrible and hopeless dungeon.

Some said he saved these because he chose to do so, others did not explain why ; but none of them, certainly, had deserved to be saved any more than the others, since all alike had broken the king's conditions. It was necessary, however, since the king was unable to break or change his laws, that some arrangement should be made by which he could be legally warranted in keeping these children at court, while he sent all the others to torment. For, by and by, there was to be a great public examination at the capital, and all the children who had ever been a term in the school were going to pass their trial ; and, of course, it was certain that all would be condemned ; and the children already in the dungeon were to be brought out and put to shame before the royal court for their failure to keep the perfect rule of the school ; and though some said they were going to be put to death, the most said that

they were to be sent down again to the dungeon, to be tortured with torment worse than death, and the king would not hear their prayer when they begged to be killed instead. And the children who had been in former terms taken to court would have to be sent to the dungeon too, unless some way was found to avoid the terms of the law and get them a pardon.

Meantime, things grew worse and worse in the school,—as was natural under such hopeless conditions; and the children of the district are said to have grown more disobedient and reckless every term. And the king would have drowned them in his anger, had he not, long ago, done this very thing, without any effect, besides having given his royal seal that he never would do so again. He therefore devised the following remarkable plan, or scheme, for his school. He agreed with the prince that he should spend a term in it, just like the rest of the children. He had been educated beforehand at his father's court, and he was, therefore, able with great ease to keep the rules, and to resist the temptations which were so strong for the ordinary peasant children. You would think now that the prince had a glorious chance to help the children of the district to keep the rules: and it is believed that he did help them somewhat; but this was not the reason why the king sent him. Indeed, since he could never be expected to help them to keep every rule, and, since a single disobedience was enough to lose the chance of promotion, it would have done little good for him to help them in this way. But the idea was, that the prince should stir up the passions and put himself in the way of the bad children in the school, till they should finally beat him and drive him out of the district. And if a drop of the blood-royal was spilt, after that the king and the prince could be legally permitted to clear any one whom they chose from going to the dungeon. For one drop of the prince's blood was

thought to be worth more than all the lives of all the ordinary children. (There were various strange theories how this could be, and some insisted that it was important to know how; but the general feeling was that the fact was enough.)

All this took place, and the king allowed it; and the prince's term in the school closed with abuse and suffering. Then the king made a new proclamation: "Whereas, my son has gone into the rebel district; and whereas, being innocent, the bad children have made him to suffer; I hereby hold myself free to clear from prison on his account the children who went to court in former terms of the school. And hereafter I freely forgive and promote any children; provided, before the end of their term, they confess, first, that they believe my management of the school is perfectly fair; and, second, that what the prince suffered in the last hour of his term was a just offset to the torments in prison of all the thousands of ordinary children who ever went through the school. Whoever admitted that he believed these things, and looked to the blood of the prince to clear him from prison, should be sent to the court; and whoever did not admit it, however good a scholar he tried to be during his term, should be sent to the terrible prison just as before." This was the proclamation which the king made; in order, he said, that no one any longer need ever go to the prison.

And after this things went on in the school for as many as eighteen or nineteen years; and a great many children went through the school, term after term; and still, just as before, only a few were ever promoted to court; and the awful majority were sent to the dungeon. Indeed, in some benches of the school, the children never as much as heard of the new proclamation, or even distinctly of the original laws of the school. For the king was said to have

provided only one original document, and had taken no very great pains to have it posted in different parts of the school. He had even left this work to the children to do, who mostly neglected it. Moreover, the school grew little, if any, better. For while some had forgotten the very existence of the king, because, for many terms neither he nor the prince, nor any court-messenger, had entered it, those few benches who read his proclamation signed the confession easily enough; and some of them, indeed, really tried harder to keep the rules; but the most of them did not appear different from other children, and some few were rather worse. For they seemed to say to themselves: "We shall go to the court anyway on the prince's account; and this term here does not much matter; and we shall never have any chance for sport at the capital, unless we take it here." Moreover, there was another set of children who were very inquisitive, and they used to talk in this way: "This is the worst school," said they, "which ever was heard of. The king might have *known* how it would turn out. Why did he compel us to enter it? We did not want it. *Why* couldn't he give us but one term to try in? Why! our poor fathers and mothers, who don't know a thousandth part as much as the king, used to be fairer than that with us. They always forgave us, whenever we tried again to do right." "Oh! wasn't it bad enough," these inquiring children asked, "wasn't it bad enough to lose your chance of promotion for ever by a single disobedience, without being sent to prison besides all your lives, without any hope or pity?" "Didn't it look," they used to whisper to each other, "as though the king never had meant to save but a few?" "Or had the king," they almost trembled to think, "made a terrible mistake with his school?" For they were accustomed to hear it called a failure, and were sometimes told that it was going to be burned by and by.

But some of them began to study his new proclamation, and thought, as they studied it, that they saw reason for hope. And they read it in this way: "Maybe the king means that whoever, after this proclamation, leaves off disobeying, and tries to be as good as the prince was, somehow or other the king will forgive him and take him to court." And they began to be glad, and to follow the rules as the prince did when he was in the school; and they remembered some beautiful words which he had spoken about gentleness and truth, and honesty and forgiveness.

Now there was a set of the children who took on themselves specially to teach the rest, because the king had not sent any schoolmaster to teach the children for many years, but had left them to teach each other as well as they could. And when they found what the inquisitive children were saying, and how they were beginning to be hopeful about their chance of promotion, they came and said that these others had quite misunderstood the proclamation, and that *trying to be good* did not help any one. "But you must 'believe,'" they said, "what we tell you about these things; viz., first, that you ought by good rights to go to prison for ever for a single disobedience; and, second, that the prince's suffering, a good many years ago, is a fair offset for any amount of torment to thousands of ordinary children. If you believe this," they said, "you will have pardon. But if you don't believe this," they threatened, "you cannot be pardoned; and, unless you are pardoned, your good character in the school is not enough to give you promotion, and you will have to be sent to the dungeon just as before."

And by and by, moreover, it came to be claimed in the school that it was not enough even to sign the confession, much less to try to behave like the prince: but you must be willing to undergo some strange process, and

have your natural mind taken away before you could have pardon ; and after that you would be able to believe things which before, to the natural mind, seemed incredible. And some said, that any who pleased could have their "minds changed ;" but the brighter ones were inclined to think only those who were specially chosen. All the rest who did not have their minds changed before they left the school (and some of them were very amiable children) would have to go to the dungeon. I read, too, that some of the best of the inquisitive children answered very deliberately to this, that, if such were really the case, they would prefer to go along with their brothers and sisters to suffer in prison, rather than go to the court of such a terrible king. "For," said they, "we are sure of the goodness of our brothers and sisters ; and our own poor parents have taught us better than to care, for the sake of our own selfish pleasure, to live even at the king's court."

Here the story came to an end, and the strangest thing of it all was, that it was said to have been thought in old times that this king was the greatest, kindest, and best who had ever reigned ; that he did all these things because he *loved* the children, and because he was wiser and juster than any one else !

Now, the more I thought of this story and tried to believe it, the more monstrous it seemed ; till I began to doubt whether any such king ever lived ; and I read many books and studied the ancient chronicles, to know, if possible, what the truth was ; and, at last, I found out all about it. Now this strange story did not go back to the age of the great king at all. And I learned the true story, and I wondered to think how such a terrible tale could ever have grown out of the beautiful and simple record of those early books.

The true story was something like this. It seemed that

all the children belonged to the blood-royal, and the king loved to be called their great Father; and he trained all the children to be his soldiers, and his courtiers, and his officers of state. He had vast dominions, and places were ready as fast as the children were worthy to fill them. But in all his kingdom he would not have a servant who was not brave, and true, and honest, and kind, like himself. So he trained his children for their high career. And I learned that it was not easy work, but cost time and money and patience; and it was not strange that the children did not always see what good it was going to do them. And I learned a good deal about a particular room in the school; for the records were mostly silent about other rooms. The children here began mostly young and poor and ignorant; and the term was short. And I saw the king's wonderful patience with them. All he asked in this short term was, that they should work and make gain. And he seemed to pity them so much, because it was hard for them to learn, and because they were naturally so slow. And he gave them all kinds of help, and steadily made the school better term after term. And there were some wonderful scholars now and then in the school; and when they came, the king showed them how to teach the rest; and I read that there was one particular lad who came for a term, when there seemed to be a crisis in the school. No one had ever been so good before, and no one had come up to him since. Indeed, some, after he was gone, said he was the prince from the court, whom the king had sent on purpose to help the school. Anyway, the king loved him very much, and showed him how to do a deal of good for all the other scholars. And this shows how kind he was, that, when some of the children abused him, he asked the king to forgive them, because, he said, they didn't know any better. And it came to pass, when he went away, that

some of the scholars formed a society in the school, which they called by his name ; and they all agreed to help each other learn and to live for the king, and to try to be like their wonderful friend. And it was beautiful to see how happy these children were who belonged to this society ; and it spread among all the benches of the school.

And I read that every day in that school there was a sort of examination. No examination was ever so fair and kind. If a scholar had made any gain that day in the things taught in the school, — viz., courage, kindness, obedience, promptness, and wisdom, — he was seated higher accordingly ; and if he made any loss in these things, he had to go down : so exact was the daily trial ; and no scholar ever lost or gained without the king giving him credit.

And I read that, at the end of each term, every scholar went up to have his place given him by the king. Wher-ever he belonged, and whatever he had fitted himself for, there he went : a few, I think, who had made special progress, to the court, to serve the king there ; a few of the wisest and best, to learn the king's business in the provinces ; others, to higher rooms in the school, where they could learn faster. But what of those who had missed their chances in this lower room ? They had to go down where they belonged ; each one, according to the place where he stood, when his turn came to go out of the school. And when some of the children were care-less and disobedient, or if they disgraced their royal name by falsehood and cowardice and unkindness, however the king pitied them, he was not able to save them from pain and shame ; and nothing could save them unless they turned and began again to learn the king's lesson. Thus all was perfectly fair ; and every thing served in that school to warn the children against doing evil, and to show them the beauty and goodness of living for the

sake of the king. And it came to pass that such children as lived in this way hardly thought of the future, or only thought of it as a happy hope, so busy were they with learning and doing the king's service. Neither did they concern themselves where he should place them, they trusted so fearlessly to his perfect justice and love

ORTHODOX
VIEWS OF THE ATONEMENT
EXAMINED,

WITH ESPECIAL REFERENCE TO SOME RECENT
STATEMENTS OF REV. JOSEPH COOK.

A LECTURE DELIVERED BY JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE TO
THE CHURCH OF THE DISCIPLES, SUNDAY, MAY 6,

AND

REPORTED VERBATIM FOR THE CHRISTIAN REGISTER.



AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,
BOSTON.

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“The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims.”

ORTHODOX VIEWS OF THE ATONEMENT EXAMINED.

I PURPOSE to speak of the doctrine of the Atonement, as it has been held, and as it is held by those who consider themselves the orthodox; and also as it has been lately illustrated and explained in the lectures of Rev. Joseph Cook. This doctrine of the Atonement is considered to be at once the most important, vital, and essential of all the orthodox doctrines. It is also one of the most obscure and difficult to understand. The doctrine of the Trinity as a proposition is perfectly plain. There is no obscurity in the statement. The only question is, Is it true or is it not true? The doctrine of the Atonement, on the other hand, has always been a very confused doctrine in the minds of those who have held it. I remember once conversing with an old gentleman who had been an orthodox minister until he was too old to preach, and he told me that in a conversation with a large number of the most eminent orthodox divines the question was proposed,—What is the doctrine of the Atonement? No two, he said, could be found to agree in their definitions, and they finally admitted that it was one of the most difficult things either to understand or to state. Dr. Bushnell, one of the most eminent theologians orthodoxy has produced in modern times,—although it is proper to say that in some respects he is regarded as a heretic among them, never being punished, however, for his heresy, or expelled from the denomination, but always remaining in communion with the orthodox,—

in his work called "God in Christ" speaks, in one of the parts which discusses the Atonement, of this great division in the minds of the orthodox as to its meaning. He says that from the beginning to the present time "it has ever been held, on the orthodox side of the church, to be a redemptive offering paid to God; not, however, in any such form as indicates the existence of a settled and uniform opinion on the subject. There is a general concurrence in the words *vicarious*, *expiation*, *offering*, *substitute*, and the like, but no agreement as to the manner in which they are to get their meaning. Sometimes the analogy of criminal law is taken; and then our sins are spoken of as being transferred to Christ, or he as having accepted them to bear the penalty. Sometimes the civil or commercial law furnishes the analogy; and then, our sins being taken as a debt, Christ offers himself as a ransom for us. Or the analogy of the ceremonial law is accepted; and then Christ is set forth as a propitiatory, or expiatory offering, to obtain remission of sins for us." And he says, further: "On the whole I know of no definite and fixed point on which the orthodox view, so called, may be said to hang, unless it be this; viz., that Christ suffers evil as evil, or in direct and simple substitution for evil that was to be suffered by us." And then he goes on to oppose that doctrine, and to say that it cannot be sustained, that he cannot defend it. Dr. Bushnell also says,—and I will read this, because Mr. Cook has expressed great disapprobation at those who accuse the orthodox of saying that Christ was punished in the place of human sinners,—"Calvin maintains the truly horrible doctrine that Christ descended into hell when crucified, and suffered the pains of the damned for three days." I have read these passages to show that, in the opinion of one of the most eminent orthodox theologians in New England,—one who certainly knew as much about the

opinion of the theologians of the day as any man now does,—there is no agreement among orthodox theologians as to the theory of Atonement. They hold that Christ by his death, somehow or other, has enabled God to forgive sinners. They are all agreed as to that; but as to the question, *how* God forgives sinners, they are not agreed at all.

Let me say, in the next place, that in the New Testament there is a great deal said of the influence of the death of Christ in bringing about the pardon of sin. We read many passages there, some from the lips of Christ himself and others from the Apostles, to the effect that Christ gave his life “a ransom for many;” that we were redeemed from our iniquities by the precious blood of Christ; that he died for us, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; that he was an offering for sin; that he was the paschal offering,—“Christ our passover is sacrificed for us;” and so on. We must meet all the facts of the case, and among the facts is certainly this one: that the New Testament does lay great stress upon the death of Christ in regard to its influence on the pardon of mankind, the pardon of human sin. The question arises, What is that influence, and how does it come about? Here comes in theory, here comes in theology. And now, in order that we may understand this theory, seeing it is so confused in the minds of most of us by the mixture of a great many different notions, and by the use of the same language in common by persons who differ entirely in their views of the meaning of that language,—in order that we may understand as definitely as possible what the doctrine of the Atonement is, we must look at what it has been. By a short historical survey alone can we get any clear idea upon the subject.

Let me say, then, that for the earliest theologians we must go back almost to the time of the apostolic fathers,

beginning with Irenæus, who is one of the earliest Christian fathers who has any thing to say on the subject. All the early Christian teachers and writers took hold of those expressions in the New Testament which call Christ's death a ransom, or speak of it as a redemption. That was what impressed their minds. We are slaves, in some way, and are to be redeemed. Sin is a slavery. We are under a terrible and cruel master, and we are to be redeemed from his power. Some ransom has to be paid to this power of evil, this power of darkness. It was very natural that in the early centuries of the church this should have been the idea which took possession of the minds of the thinkers. Their thought laid hold of those theories which make sin a slavery, and a slavery brought about by war. In those days, whenever two nations went to war with each other, the prisoners were sold as slaves. That was the universal custom. And the only way by which the slaves could get their freedom was by having their friends pay a ransom and redeem them. When the fathers found in the New Testament such words as "ransom" and "redemption" applied to the work of Christ, they immediately took hold of these words, because they were what they were accustomed to. They lived in the midst of the horrors of war, of slavery, of cruelty. For nearly a thousand years the church continued in the midst of persecutions from without and from within; first, from the Roman Empire; then afterwards came all the terrible cruelties and evils resulting from the invasions of the northern tribes, the Goths and the Vandals, &c. And so in that age of suffering from slavery, that age of outward evils of all kinds, Christian teachers took hold of these ideas and made them the basis of a theory of Atonement. And then, still holding to these words, "ransom" and "redemption," they said If we are slaves, to whom are we slaves? The person

who holds us as slaves is the one to whom the ransom is to be paid. We are to be redeemed from the power of a cruel task-master; therefore the ransom cannot be paid to God, for God is not a cruel task-master. That was the first point they made out. Who, then, is the power? The power is the devil. They had a universal belief in those days of the reality of the devil as the prince of evil. All evil came from him. Then, said they, If we are to be redeemed from the power of evil, we are to be redeemed by being ransomed from the devil. Strange as all this may seem to us now, for one thousand years in the church this doctrine was the orthodox and universally believed doctrine of the Atonement,—universal with a few exceptions, because a few protested against it. It was the almost universal doctrine of the church that Christ redeemed us from the power of the devil; that every man who commits sin, by that sin becomes properly the slave of the devil; that the devil has his rights to the man, who can only escape from the power of the devil by these rights being satisfied. And now the theory was that Christ redeemed us from the power of the devil by allowing the devil to put him to death. The devil had no power over Christ, for Christ had not committed sin. He had no right, then, to take the life of Christ; yet it was by the instigation of the devil that the persecutors of Christ, the Jews and the Romans, put him to death. Then the devil found himself on the wrong side. He had done something which he had no right to do, and, therefore, in order to make up for doing that which he had no right to do, he was obliged to give up all those who belonged to Christ. Christ had overpaid the devil to that amount, and the devil must pay him back; and the only way to do so was by giving up those victims whom he had secured before. You may think it strange that this should have been the orthodox theory in the

church, but it was the theory held for a thousand years. It was worked out by Irenæus, developed still further by Origen, and continued to be the theory of the church, being taught, in some form or other, by the principal fathers and teachers of the church, but always with this fundamental idea, that Christ redeemed us from the power of the devil. And the ransom was paid to the devil, not to God, for we are not slaves to God, but slaves to the evil power. As long as they clung to these two words, "ransom" and "redemption," so long, it is evident, they could not get away from that theory.

But after a while all these ages of war and cruelty passed away. The conquerors of the Roman Empire were tamed. They were Christianized. A peaceful period came in. They became aware of their need of law, and they went to the Roman law, which was accepted and studied. It was made one of the principal objects of study in all the great schools; and in all the ecclesiastical schools,—there were hardly any others,—they not only studied theology, but they studied civil law. Then arose the second great theory of the Atonement, the theory based on the law of debt and payment; and it was the theory which was brought to its perfection by the famous Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, and scholar of Lanfranc, who was one of the greatest theologians of his age, and was born before the middle of the eleventh century. Anselm gave another theory of the Atonement, and his theory was that of "satisfaction." His theory was that the payment was made to God, and not to the devil. He maintained that the devil had no rights at all, and was not to be considered in the case. He defined sin as not paying to God what we owe him. That was his definition of sin,—not paying the debt due to God. We owe to God, said he, perfect obedience. Whenever a man disobeys God he incurs the guilt of sin; and the glory of God, and the

honor of God, and the justice of God, require either that he shall be punished or that satisfaction shall be made to the honor of God. Now, satisfaction, you see, and punishment are here two different things. In that theory, satisfaction is one thing and punishment is another. And how can satisfaction be made? Evidently man cannot make it himself, says Anselm, because he is obliged to pay to God the full debt, and that is more than he can do. His whole future life is only paying the debt due to God, and how shall the demand on account of his past sins be met? We have an infinite obligation to God, he says, and every time we do not fulfil that obligation we ought to endure an infinite penalty; for, since the bribe of the whole universe ought not to tempt us to disobey God, it is evident that sin is of more importance than the whole universe. Now, since man owes this debt and cannot pay it,—only God can pay such a debt,—therefore Christ became God-man. The title of Anselm's treatise is, "Cur Deus Homo?" or, "Why did God become a Man?" and the answer is, In order to pay the debt which man owes, and make satisfaction to God. And Christ, says Anselm, made satisfaction to God, not by his life, because as a man he was bound always to perform the perfect obedience which man owes to God. Nothing is gained, then, by the life of Christ. But he was not obliged to die, and, being God-man, in his death the infinite character of the Godhead comes in and makes full equivalent of all that is due from man to God. Now, that is the theory of satisfaction, and that endured for about five hundred years. The first theory lasted about a thousand years, and the second about five hundred; in fact, down to about the time of the Reformation.

With the Reformation came in a third class of ideas,—ideas concerning governmental law, not merely of civil law, or criminal law, but also of governmental law or

jurisprudence. And at this time the Protestant theologians, Luther and Calvin and the rest, having accepted Anselm's doctrine in the main, modified it in some respects by teaching, for the first time, that Christ was punished in the place of sinners. Mr. Cook, you will observe, is continually asserting that it is a slander upon the orthodox to say that they believe that Christ is punished in the place of sinners. I am glad to think that they do not now believe it; but it is idle to say that they have not believed it, because this was the almost universal doctrine of Protestant theologians from the time of the Reformation until a comparatively recent period. It was the general doctrine of Protestant theologians that Christ was punished in the place of sinners, and the first attack upon that doctrine was made by the Socinians; and when our friend Mr. Cook cries out in indignation against the idea of an innocent person being punished in the place of the guilty, he is really following the lead of the early Socinians. They were the first to attack this theory in the church, and by the power of their arguments they drove from the field the old doctrine and obliged the orthodox to substitute another. For example, Socinus argued that this doctrine of satisfaction made to the justice of God, so that every debt can be fully paid to God, utterly destroyed the quality of mercy in the Almighty; for if every debt is paid, how can God be merciful? how can he forgive when there is nothing to forgive? On this theory it was asserted, therefore, that the justice of God was made virtually the only attribute of the Almighty and his mercy and his love are entirely ignored. Moreover, the Socinians asserted, not only is justice made, in the minds of the theologians, the chief attribute of God, but it is a justice which is injustice; for how can you speak of justice which inflicts punishment upon the innocent in the place of the sinner? And the argument

was brought forward with great force against the Protestant doctrine that Christ is punished in the place of the sinner,— by his death taking the place of the sinner and being punished in his stead. Luther and the other theologians had first begun to speak of the active and passive obedience of Christ. Christ they said, had died, was punished in the place of the sinner, so that the sinner did not now need to be punished to be saved from hell; but the sinner was not got into heaven until Christ, by his whole life, took his place and performed all the meritorious actions which enabled the sinner to come to heaven. That was their theory. The Socinians replied, How can you transfer holiness from one person to another? How can the holiness of Christ take the place of the holiness required of man to fit him for heaven? Man is only made fit for heaven by being holy himself, and the holiness of Christ cannot be transferred on the one side, any more than the punishment of Christ can be transferred on the other. These arguments were enforced with so much ability on the part of the Socinians, that that theory was also demolished, just as the first theory, that man was a slave to the devil, had been demolished.

Then came the third orthodox theory which was first brought forward by Hugo Grotius. Grotius was also one of the great founders of the modern doctrines concerning government. The idea of government filled his mind, and so his theory of Atonement was a governmental theory.

He said that the object of the death of Christ was to make it possible for God in his government to forgive sin without injuring the character of his government, and that a government which should forgive sin without satisfaction being made to it in any way, would be a feeble and powerless government. Something must be done to prevent the law from being dishonored, and the death of Christ comes in to make such an impression on the mind of

man of the evil of sin that the same result is produced as if man had been punished; so that Christ, although he is not punished by any means in the place of sinners, yet makes it possible to God, as a righteous governor, to forgive sin without any injury to the order and peace of the universe.

That is the third orthodox doctrine of the Atonement, and that is the doctrine which, in the main, prevails now among orthodox teachers. You will see that there is this vast difference between that doctrine and all previous doctrines of the Atonement; namely, that the object now is not to produce an effect upon God, or to satisfy any of the attributes of the Almighty; it is not a transaction having its object in the other world, but it is a transaction the purpose of which is to produce an effect upon the human mind. In other words, it is a moral influence which is to be exerted. The object is to produce such an effect upon the minds of men in regard to the evil of sin that they will not take advantage of the forgiveness of God to think that sin is a very light matter, and something in which they can lightly indulge. And so the government of God is maintained in its character by the death of Christ, by producing such an effect upon the human mind touching the evil of sin.

Now, in regard to this third theory, which I say is the prevailing orthodox theory of the present time, we must make one or two objections. The other two great theories rested upon Scripture. The first theory rested upon the words "ransom" and "redemption," and other words of that character which had reference to slavery and war. The second theory rests upon those words which speak of sin as a debt; for instance, the words "forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." But in the time of the New Testament there were no speculations upon jurisprudence. There were no such things as popular govern-

ment or the rights of the people understood in the world in those days; and, consequently, the rulers of the world being almost absolute, and not recognizing that they had any duties to perform to their subjects, there was nothing then to bring up such questions as were raised when the theory of Grotius was brought forward; and, therefore, we do not find any basis in Scripture, for this last theory. It is nowhere said in Scripture that Christ died in order to make it possible for God, as a good governor, to forgive sin. In the second place, that is not the object which is stated in the New Testament. The object which is there stated is, that Christ died to manifest the divine love to sinners; not to show the evil of sin, but to manifest the love of God to a sinful world: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son;" "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and gave his only son to be the propitiation for our sins."

In fact, when you come to compare all these theories together, you will find that there is this one distinction to be made between them; namely, that some of them speak of the object of Christ as redemption, and others as reconciliation. Now, when we penetrate to the inner meaning of the word "redemption," we shall find that it really signifies this,—that it is deliverance from the power of evil; and when we look at the meaning of the word "reconciliation," we shall find the meaning to be that it brings us into union or peace or harmony with God. Now the two evils resulting from sin are these: one is, that it creates a power of evil habit; or, in other words, it depraves the character of the man himself, and we are redeemed from that by any influence which enables us to break the chain of this evil habit. The work of Christ, therefore, is redemption just so far as it enables us by the influence of his teaching, his life, his death, his resurrection, or any other influence coming from him, to

break the chain of evil habit. In that we are redeemed lies one part of the influence of Christ. The other part is reconciliation. One of the effects of the conscious violation of the law of God is to bring into the human mind the feeling of guilt and estrangement. We have done something wrong, and we feel towards God exactly as we feel towards a man when we have done him any wrong. If you have done any wrong towards a man, and are conscious of it, you do not like to see him, or to go near him ; you would rather keep out of his sight. If you have the feeling that you have injured a man, and are not prepared to make proper acknowledgment or restitution, then you like to keep away from him. That is a very natural feeling. The same feeling is expressed in the Old Testament when it said that Adam hid himself from God in the garden. If any one has justly offended the Almighty by a wilful violation of the divine law, the first effect on his mind is estrangement and alienation. He does not like to think of God. If he has been in the habit of child-like trust and communion with God, a sudden cloud comes between him and the Almighty. He does not look toward God, but he turns away. That is alienation, and reconciliation is any thing which comes to him to make him feel that he can come back to be in friendly, happy communion with God. Suppose you have done wrong to somebody, have offended him or injured him in some way, and feel that you do not want to say that you have wronged him ; but suppose that person should come to you and say, " I know that you have not done exactly right towards me, but I am just as much your friend as ever ; " that would remove the feeling of alienation. If you do not do it, the other party might do it. Now this reconciliation, this coming of the sinner again into communion with God, is effected by Christ. That is the doctrine in the New Testament. But the question is, How

is it done? Is it done by any effect produced by Christ on the mind of God? Is God reconciled to us by the death of Christ, or are we reconciled to God by the death of Christ? Is it an effect produced on the mind of God, or is it an effect produced on the mind of man?

The orthodox theory has formerly been that it is an effect produced upon the mind of God. The rational and the liberal theory is that it is an effect produced upon the mind of man. But you will find now that a great many orthodox teachers, when pressed to explain what they mean by the modern doctrine which began with Grotius, are obliged to come to this ground,—that the only effect produced in the reconciliation of man to God is that produced upon the mind of man. And yet they use the same old language in regard to “expiation” and “redemption” and the “Vicarious Atonement,” &c. But if we can only clear our ideas on this subject, we shall see that the New Testament everywhere says that Christ died, not to reconcile God to man, but to reconcile man to God. And is it not the most rational theory? God’s character is not changed by any thing man can do. He remains always the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever. He is always infinite love towards all his creatures. If there is any estrangement between sinners and God, it is not because he is estranged from them, but because they are estranged from him; it is not because he has turned away from them, but because they have turned away from him. Here are two chords of a musical instrument. They are out of harmony with each other: the one is in tune, the other is not in tune. Which is to be modified in order that it shall be brought into harmony with the other? Evidently the one out of tune is to be modified, not the one in tune. Therefore, if there is alienation between God and man, it is not God, but man, who is to be changed, in order to effect a reconciliation. Therefore

you will find that in every case where any thing like reconciliation or forgiveness is mentioned, the Scriptures speak of man being reconciled to God, and not of God being reconciled to man. For instance: "For if, when we were enemies, *we were reconciled to God* by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Rom. v. 10); and again, "For if the casting away of them be *the reconciling of the world*" (Rom. xi. 15). Here it is not the reconciling of God that is spoken of, but of the world. And in another very famous passage in 2 Cor. v. 19, 20, we read, "God was in Christ, *reconciling the world unto himself*,"—not that God was being reconciled,—"not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, *be ye reconciled to God*." So also in Eph. ii. 13, we read, "But now in Christ Jesus *ye who sometimes were afar off are made nigh* by the blood of Christ,"—not, God is made nigh unto us by the blood of Christ, but we are made nigh to him; in Col. i. 21, "And you, that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works,"—according to the meaning I have just explained,—"yet now *hath he reconciled*,"—he has reconciled you, not, he is being reconciled; and in 1 Pet. iii. 18, "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, *that he might bring us to God*."

Now we come to one other point, How does Christ bring us to God by his death? God is not to be reconciled to man: we are to be reconciled to him. But, before we come to that, I will just consider whether Mr. Cook, in his lectures, has introduced any important modification into the theory of Atonement. If you have been able to follow me in what I have said, you have in your minds

the whole history, essentially, of the doctrine of the Atonement in all its points from the beginning. Of course there are innumerable details, but you have the main threads of the doctrine in your mind. Now here is what Mr. Cook says in his lecture of April 16th, if I understand him. He is considering the doctrine of the Atonement in the light of self-evident, scientific truth. He says that "man is a sinner;" that sin "produces estrangement between the soul and God." That is so: so far we are agreed. He goes on to say: "It is not enough to repent, not enough to reform, not enough to have similarity of feeling with God, in order to have peace." It is questionable whether that is true, either in the light of Scripture or in the light of human experience. If we repent and have similarity of feeling with God, it must be inevitable that we shall have peace. At any rate, that is the doctrine of the Old Testament and of the New Testament: "When the wicked man turneth away from the wickedness which he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive." That is enough to give him peace, and that is promised in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, the Apostle John in his first Epistle (i. 8, 9) says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." There are both sides, you see, — reconciliation and redemption. What we have to do is to confess our sins; and confession here, of course, implies penitence. And if we repent, the faithfulness and the justice of God are pledged to forgive us. According to John, if we repent, God would be unjust if he did not forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Nothing can possibly be said stronger than that, and yet Mr. Cook says it is not enough to repent, not enough to reform,

not enough to have similarity of feeling with God, in order to have peace. He says, further, that "a man may commit a crime, repent, trust in the Atonement, hate all that God hates, love all that God loves; and yet, as long as the record of the past crime is behind him, he cannot be at peace,— entire, satisfactory peace." He says, very properly, the record of the past crime may always remain; and he says also, at the end of his lecture, very properly, that this will not give him any serious pain in heaven, because he will see that all his sins, and the sins of others, have been overruled to the honor of God and the happiness of the universe. But here, Mr. Cook says, the man will not have peace, because he will think of the record of his past sin. Although Mr. Cook does not express it distinctly, he seems to say that the man will think that something ought to be done to get rid of that record, otherwise he cannot have peace.

His first illustration is the case of a schoolmate of his who had committed murder, but who had repented of it; who believed in the Atonement, and expected to die very happy in consequence of that; and yet he could not have perfect peace because the record of his past sin was behind him. Well, if he could not have perfect peace when he repented and believed in the Atonement, I do not see what Mr. Cook could do further to give him peace. According to Mr. Cook, he already believed in the Atonement, and expected to be saved by that, so I do not see how in any way any theory of Mr. Cook could help him.

Mr. Cook then passes to the illustration of Lady Macbeth and Macbeth himself, and assumes, very curiously, that Lady Macbeth, at the time she was trying to wash the spot out of her hand, was a true penitent, and yet could not have peace, could not wash the imaginary spot of blood from her hand. He lays great stress upon that

If the case illustrates his proposition, it must be because Lady Macbeth was a true penitent; but I have read the play of Macbeth several times, and have not yet discovered that it was intended to be taught that Lady Macbeth, at the time she was suffering in that way from the pangs of remorse, was penitent. Remorse is not penitence, as we all know. Repentance implies faith in God, love to him, and willingness to bear any punishment that may come in the order of his providence; in acquiescence with his will, in being satisfied that every thing is right, and gladness in being able to confess it. None of these qualities are to be found in Lady Macbeth at that time.

Then Mr. Cook goes on to say — what we have just been saying — that personal ill-desert cannot be removed from one person to another. Our guilt is not borne by our Saviour in the sense of blameworthiness. There he is following in the footsteps of the Socinians. He would not like to be called a Socinian, I presume, but so far he is a Socinian. Then he says that guilt has two meanings: the first is personal blameworthiness; the second, obligation to render satisfaction to violated law. This second definition of guilt is brought in to make out the theory Mr. Cook is about to bring forward; but it is the first time I have heard guilt called an equivalent to obligation. Obligation to render satisfaction to violated law, he says, is guilt. I should think it were just the opposite of guilt. It is the “ghastliest of all misconceptions,” he thinks, to say “that the doctrine of the Atonement implies, first, that an innocent being is made guilty in the sense of being personally blameworthy; and, secondly, that that innocent being is punished in the sense of suffering pain for personal ill-desert.” There we are in accord. It is a ghastly misconception to think so; but it can hardly be called a misconception to say that anybody thinks so, when we know that it was the orthodox doctrine held by the early reformers, and only overthrown by Socinus.

Then Mr. Cook brings forward his third illustration of the doctrine of the Atonement. It is the famous case of Mr. Bronson Alcott, who related — as read by Mr. Cook with great delight and satisfaction, as fully illustrating his own theory — that when he was teaching school in this city, on one occasion, after a child had committed an offence, instead of punishing the child in any way he made the child punish him. He held out his hand, and made the child strike him on the hand with a ruler; and Mr. Alcott goes on to say that it made a great impression on the children, and rather helped the order of the school. I have no doubt whatever, that any such transaction as that would make a great impression, at first, on the minds of the children. It would call their attention to the subject, and make them think, — appear to them as something very curious, at any rate, if not very serious. But whether this can be taken as an illustration of the universal law of divine government is very doubtful. Mr. Cook says, very truly, that, according to the scientific view, a law which is true once is true always; that what works well under certain circumstances according to the laws of the divine government, must, under the same laws and under similar conditions, always work well. If that is so, let us see how this will work. Let us suppose now that at the next meeting of the Boston school committee they should introduce a rule, and pass it, to the effect that hereafter all punishment should be inflicted by scholars upon the teachers, and not by teachers upon the scholars! Would that, in the opinion of any sensible person, have the effect of improving the order of the schools? I think that the children would be entertained by it, and I think that the teachers would not find themselves very much helped after a little while. There would be one beneficial result, perhaps, produced by it, — that whipping in all its forms would soon disappear from the school. I think that the

teachers would none of them be inclined to support corporal punishment after that rule had been passed. But how evident it is that any such illustration as this must fail in showing that any justice, any right, any truth is manifested by such vicarious punishment. Mr. Cook does not, however, believe in vicarious punishment. But this illustration of his, if it has any meaning, would require that the teacher should be willing to be punished himself in place of the punishment given to the pupil. Mr. Cook attempts to evade this inference by saying that there is a difference between chastisement and punishment; that Christ was chastised in the place of sinners, not punished in their place; and that Mr. Alcott, also, was chastised, but not punished. I was immediately struck with this distinction. It seemed to me a novel one. I referred to the English dictionary, and I found that the word chastisement was defined as punishment. I could not find that the dictionaries made the distinction which our friend has made. The only difference which I could perceive between the words punishment and chastisement was this—and I think that this is the difference in meaning between the two terms,—that chastisement is that punishment which is inflicted on any person who has committed an offence, not merely from abstract justice or to maintain law, but for the good of the offender. But it must be inflicted on the offender. It must therefore be punishment having for its object the good of the offender. In this sense, therefore—if it is the true sense,—Christ could not have been chastised, because he was not an offender, and was not to be benefited by the chastisement. “He chastens, not for his own pleasure, but for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness.” There is not one of the passages in the New Testament where chastisement is spoken of, but we are there plainly taught that chastisement is that suffering which we endure in conse-

quence of our sins, under the benign law of God, who inflicts it upon us not for his pleasure, however, but because we need it for our good. The New Testament teaches that all punishment inflicted by the Almighty has a reformatory purpose, and proceeds from a divine love, and not from a mere abstract sense of justice. Therefore it does not seem that this supposed distinction between chastisement and punishment will hold at all.

And now let us ask, in what way the death of Christ really has this reconciling effect upon man? How does Christ reconcile man to God? I think, by a law of human nature which I illustrated just now. I said that if you had offended or injured a friend, and considered that he must be necessarily offended with you, and if he should come to you and show you that he was not offended with you, and was perfectly ready to forgive you and receive you back into his friendship, then he would reconcile you to himself or you would be reconciled to him. The object of the life and death and resurrection of Christ was to show that God so loved the world, notwithstanding the sins of the world, that he sent his best beloved child, the noblest and purest being whom he had ever put upon this earth, and allowed him to suffer and to die, in order to show to man his strong forgiving love. Through Christ has come into the world the sense of the forgiving love of God. There is something wonderful in self-sacrifice. When the good and the noble, instead of seeking their own exaltation and their own happiness, devote themselves to the rescue and the help of those who are below them spiritually and morally, and go down even willingly to die that these may be saved, there is a power which goes forth from that voluntary self-sacrifice,—a manifestation of love, which is the most convincing proof of the divine love of the world: God's love shines through it to man, and the influence of that love is always vast. It is the same power

which has been always exerted by the martyrs in all ages. The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church. Only the power increases in proportion to the elevation of character of the being who gives himself for others. That Christ, instead of seeking his own glory, or wishing to enjoy the rewards of all his holiness and goodness in the heavenly world, should have devoted himself here to sinful men and lived only for the sake of helping others,—that was what astonished the Apostles in the beginning, and it was the theme of their preaching. “Let this mind be in you,” says the Apostle, “which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God” (being a manifestation of the divine holiness and goodness, one with the Father in his holy spirit) “did not think this God-likeness a thing to be eagerly grasped;” (“thought it not robbery to be equal with God,” is our translation. The meaning is that he did not go forward and say, “I am like God; look at me; see the magnificence of my position and character”) Instead of doing that, what did Jesus do? He humbled himself, made himself like a servant, and being found in the fashion of a servant, came to help and serve others. He submitted himself to the death of the cross, the most degrading death of all, in order to help man; “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.” Now that was the power which came from Christ, the reconciling power. It makes us feel the truth of what he says when he tells us that we must be like our Father in heaven, not to return evil with evil, but to overcome evil with good. That is the only way in which evil can be overcome, namely, by good. You can resist evil with evil. By means of force, by prisons and the gallows, you can prevent evil from becoming very much worse. You can keep it back, you can keep it down, by force; but you cannot cure it except by goodness, by the manifestation of superior love. And

that is the power of Christ. With this power Christ overcomes evil with good, and we are reconciled to God by the death of his Son whenever we see in that death the sign of infinite tenderness in our behalf. God is like the father in the parable, ready, whenever we repent, to receive us with open arms and take us back to his fatherly heart. When we can live in that belief, then we are reconciled to God. When we can maintain that faith in God, then we live in perpetual communion with him, and when we are in communion with God we can have peace. And I do not believe with Mr. Cook, that then there still remains any thing unsatisfied, any thing which needs that something more be done. It is enough for us if we are one with our Heavenly Father.

The greatest moral difficulty we ourselves meet with is that of reconciling justice and mercy, truth and love. Almost all the cases of conscience which present real difficulties in daily life emerge from some conflict between our obligations to truth and our obligations to love. A beggar comes to you with a pathetic story. Love says, "Help him," Truth says, "No: you will do more harm than good." Sympathy is on one side; principle, on the other. You go to see a friend dangerously ill. The sick friend asks whether you think he will recover. You have been ordered by the physician not to let him know how sick he is; so what will you do? Tell a lie, and be false to yourself? or tell the truth, and deprive him perhaps of his last chance of recovery? This is the eternal ethical conflict in the human mind. We naturally transfer this conflict to the mind of God and imagine the Almighty considering how *he* can forgive sin without violating the law of justice. It is out of this supposed antagonism in God's mind derived from our own, that the various doctrines of the Atonement have arisen. But now Jesus comes; and in his life, as well as in his death, we find the

harmony between Truth and Love complete. In him Mercy and Truth have met together, Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other. Though no one ever felt more deeply the evil of sin, no one was ever more tender to the sinner than he. And if we consider him, the highest being the world has known, to be the best illustration of the divine character, we see that God can also be just, and yet the justifier of those who believe in him, and trust themselves to his divine grace. So that Dr. Livingston was eminently right when he wrote in one of his latest journals: "What is the atonement of Christ but Christ himself? Is it not the whole character of Christ, his whole life and death and character, showing the infinite love of God to all his children, and drawing all to himself, not by fear, but by goodness?" Christ himself is the all-convincing proof that there is no such conflict as we imagine between justice and mercy, but that a perfectly holy being may also be perfectly ready to forgive the penitent.

The Atonement then is this, that Christ shows us, convincingly, that the Divine Justice and the Divine Love are at one. He does not *make* them to be at one; but he manifests their harmony. He shows how natural and simple it is for God to forgive every penitent sinner, as soon as he is ready to be forgiven. When we hear him saying, "Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more," we hear God saying it. He who has seen him has seen the Father, for he is full of the spirit of his Father. This is his true and glorious divinity; not to be the mysterious incarnation of some inexplicable "subsistence," but to be the perpetual spiritual manifestation of the Father's truth and the Father's love. He is the eternal word made flesh and dwelling among us,—the everlasting spiritual revelation of the Divine Truth and Love. So, being at one with God, he makes us also at one with

God. For he came, and lived, and died for this,—that all those who believe in his truth may become at one with God, as he was at one with God. There is no other atonement that will help us. The only place in the New Testament where the word “atonement” is found, says of Jesus—“by whom we have now received the atonement.” Unless we receive the atonement, and are ourselves made at one with God, the atonement of Jesus will be of no use to us.

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Unitarians believe that the world and all things herein were made and are sustained by God.

In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.—*Gen. i. 1.*

The sea is His, and He made it; and His hands formed the dry land.—*Ps. xcvi. 5.*

In His hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind.—*Job xii. 10.*

All wait upon Thee, that Thou may givest them their meat in due season. That Thou givest them, they gather; Thou openest Thine hand, they are filled with good; Thou hiddest Thy face, they are troubled; Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust; Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created; and Thou renewest the face of the earth.—*Ps. civ. 27-30.*

He holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.—*Ps. lxvi. 9.*

In Him we live, and move, and have our being.—*Acts xvii. 28.*

Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.—*Rom. xi. 36.*

Unitarians believe that God is but One; that He is a Spirit, imperceptible to the senses, but pervading all with His Presence; seeing and knowing every thing; loving righteousness, and leading men to holiness.

There is one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.—*Eph.* iv. 6.

To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him.—*1 Cor.* viii. 6.

God is a Spirit.—*John* iv. 24.

No man hath seen God at any time.—*1 John* iv. 12.

Behold, I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him; on the left hand, where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him; He hideth Himself on the right hand that I cannot see Him; but He knoweth the way that I take.—*Job* xxiii. 8-10.

Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me.—*Ps.* cxxxix. 7, 9, 10.

He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see?—*Ps.* xciv. 9.

Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world.—*Acts* xv. 18.

His eyes are upon the ways of man, and He seeth all his goings.—*Job* xxxiv. 21.

Thou, even Thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men.—*1 Kings* viii. 39.

Thou understandest my thought afar off.—*Ps.* cxxxix. 2.

The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.—*1 Sam.* xvi. 7.

Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.—*Heb.* iv. 13.

There is none holy as the Lord.—*1 Sam.* ii. 2.

All His works are done in truth; He loveth righteousness.—*Ps.* xxxiii. 4, 5.

He will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.—*1 Tim.* ii. 4.

It is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure.—*Philipp.* ii. 13.

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh.—*Acts* ii. 17.

Unitarians believe that man is, by nature, a partaker of God's Spirit, and is thus made in His image.

The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.—*Gen.* ii. 7.

God created man in His own image.—*Gen.* i. 27.

Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels.—*Ps.* viii. 5.

Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God.—*Mark* x. 14.

There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding.—*Job* xxxii. 8.

Men are made after the similitude of God.—*James* iii. 9.

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?—*1 Cor.* iii. 16.

Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you?—*1 Cor.* vi. 19.

God hath made of one blood all nations of men.—*Acts* xvii. 26.

He fashioneth their hearts alike.—*Ps.* xxxiii. 15.

Unitarians believe that man has, by nature, a Moral Sense, implanted by God,—a feeling of responsibility to do the right and shun the wrong.

The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.—*Titus ii. 11, 12.*

They show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness.—*Rom. ii. 15.*

The word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.—*Deut. xxx. 14.*

Every one of us shall give account of himself to God.—*Rom. xiv. 12.*

If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart and knoweth all things.—*1 John iii. 20.*

Unitarians believe that God's requirement is plain and simple, making each man responsible for his own righteousness.

Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good—*Rom. xii. 9.*

He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?—*Micah vi. 8*

Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, think on these things.—*Philipp. iv. 8.*

Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.—*Eccl. xii. 13.*

In every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.—*Acts x. 35.*

Let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous.—*1 John iii. 7.*

The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son ; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him ; and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.—*Ezek.* xviii. 20.

Unitarians believe that obedience is the condition of acceptance with God, and of the satisfaction of our life.

Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle ? Who shall dwell in Thy holy hill ? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.

—*Ps.* xv. 1, 2, 5.

God will render to every man according to his deeds ; to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life.—*Rom.* ii. 6, 7.

If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine.—*John* vii. 17.

If ye continue in my word, ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. —*John* viii. 31, 32.

In every nation, he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him.—*Acts* x. 35.

Unitarians believe that no man can escape the consequences of disobedience.

He that doeth wrong, shall receive for the wrong which he hath done.—*Coloss.* iii. 25.

There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked.—*Is.* xlvi. 22.

If we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment.—*Heb.* x. 26, 27.

Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil.—*Rom.* ii. 9.

Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.—*John* viii. 34.

He that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption.—*Gal.* vi. 8.

Unitarians believe, however, that God still loves the sinner; that He is leading him to repentance; and that whenever he repents, He will receive him and help him.

I will visit their transgressions with the rod and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him.—*Ps.* lxxxix. 32, 33.

The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance.—*Rom.* ii. 4.

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.—*Is.* lv. 7.

If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live,—he shall not die.—*Ez.* xviii. 21.

If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles: then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot; thou shalt forget thy misery; thou shalt shine forth; thou shalt be as the morning; thou shalt be secure, because there is hope.—*Job* xi. 14–18.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.—*1 John* i. 9.

The Lord is long-suffering to us-ward ; not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. — *2 Pet.* iii. 9.

His mercy endureth for ever. — *Ps.* cxxxvi. 1.

Unitarians believe that all this preliminary moral dealing of God with man tends to produce in him spiritual birth, or Regeneration ; that is, a voluntary union of heart and will with God's will, by which he becomes consciously a son of God, in spirit.

He that overcometh shall inherit all things ; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. — *Rev.* xxi. 7.

As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. — *Rom.* viii. 14.

Except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. — *John* iii. 5.

Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world. — *1 John* v. 4.

Unitarians believe that Jesus Christ, by such voluntary union of his will with God's will, became "the first-born among many brethren." — Rom. viii. 29.

I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me. — *John* vi. 38.

And lo, the heavens were opened unto him, . . . and lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. — *Matt.* iii. 16, 17.

He was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness. — *Rom.* i. 4.

Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross ; wherefore, God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name. — *Philipp.* ii. 8, 9.

Unitarians believe that Christ thus becomes the power of God unto salvation, by leading others to become the sons of God.

When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, that we might receive the adoption of sons. — *Gal. iv. 4, 5.*

As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, who were born, not of the will of the flesh, but of God. — *John i. 12, 13.*

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father, which is in heaven. — *Matt. vii. 21.*

Whosoever shall do the will of my Father, which is in heaven, the same is my brother. — *Matt. xii. 50.*

If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him. — *John xiv. 23.*

I pray that they all may be one; as Thou Father art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us. — *John xvii. 21.*

Unitarians believe in the Christian experience of becoming a son of God.

If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. — *2 Cor. v. 17.*

The law of the spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, hath made me free from the law of sin and death. — *Rom. viii. 2.*

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. — *Rom. viii. 16, 17.*

Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God. — *1 John iii. 1.*

Unitarians believe that the TESTS of this Christian experience are righteousness and love, and growth into the likeness of Christ.

In this the children of God are manifest; whoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother. — *1 John* iii. 10.

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin. — *1 John* iii. 9.

We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. — *1 John* iii. 14.

Now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall become; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is; and every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. — *1 John* iii. 2, 3.

We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image. — *2 Cor.* iii. 18.

Till we come, in the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. — *Eph.* iv. 13.

Unitarians believe that the FRUITS of this Christian experience are freedom, peace, joy, and a consciousness of immortality.

If ye continue in my word, ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. — *John* viii. 31, 32.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. — *2 Cor.* iii. 17.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, faith. — *Gal.* v. 22.

To be spiritually minded is life and peace. — *Rom.* viii. 6.

He that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap everlasting life. — *Gal.* vi. 8.

The world passeth away and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.—*1 John ii. 17.*

We know that if our earthly house were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.—*2 Cor. v. 1.*

As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.—*1 Cor. xv. 49.*

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.—*1 Cor. ii. 9.*

Unitarians believe that all souls will ultimately become sons of God.

All souls are mine.—*Ezek. xviii. 4.*

The Lord is not willing that any should perish.—*2 Pet. iii. 9.*

God will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.—*1 Tim. ii. 4.*

With God all things are possible.—*Matt. xix. 26.*

If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved: yet so as by fire.—*1 Cor. iii. 15.*

It is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure.—*Philipp. ii. 13.*

I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh.—*Acts ii. 17.*

All flesh shall see the salvation of God.—*Luke iii. 6.*

God sent His Son into the world, that the world through him might be saved.—*John iii. 17.*

My word shall accomplish that which I please; it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.—*Is. lv. 11.*

As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.—*1 Cor. xv. 22.*

C H R I S T

AND

T H E C R E E D S.

BY JOHN C. KIMBALL.



AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

BOSTON.

THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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I give and bequeath to the American Unitarian Association, a corporation established by law in the State of Massachusetts, the sum of.....dollars.

CHRIST AND THE CREEDS

THE Creeds say that God is three persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; that each of these persons is truly God, and that the three together are a trinity in unity.

Christ says, “ Hear, O Israel : The Lord our God is one Lord ; ” “ There is none good but one, that is God ; ” “ I ascend unto my Father and to your Father, to my God and to your God.” And Paul, professing to “ have the mind of Christ,” says, “ To us there is but ONE God, the FATHER, of whom are all things, and we in Him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.”

The Creeds teach that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are each to be addressed in worship and prayers, and the Episcopal Litany addresses each in this way.

Christ says, “ When thou prayest, pray to thy Father ; ” “ The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth ; ” and “ in that day ye shall ask me nothing.”

The Creeds say that Christ is equal to the Father. Christ says, “ My Father is greater than I.”

The Creeds say that Christ is omnipotent. Christ says, “ Of mine own self I can do nothing.”

The Creeds say that Christ is omniscient. Christ says, “ Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, neither the Son, but the Father.”

The Creeds say that Christ was one with the Father in a different sense from that in which his disciples were one with each other and one with God.

Christ prays that his disciples may "be one, even as he and the Father are one," and one in God, as he is in the Father and the Father in him.

The Creeds say that Christ has two natures, is God and man combined in one person; and that it is as God that he is mediator, judge, reconciler, a teacher of the truth, a worker of miracles, and the one through whom is the resurrection from the dead; while it is as man that he is ignorant, tempted to sin, and able to do nothing.

Christ uses the word "I" as covering his whole nature, and declares he is "a MAN that hath told you the truth." And his apostles say, "There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the MAN Christ Jesus;" God "will judge the world in righteousness by that MAN whom he hath ordained;" "Jesus of Nazareth, a MAN approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by him;" "Since by man came death, by MAN, also, came the resurrection from the dead;" and "In ALL THINGS it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might make reconciliation for the sins of the people."

Some of the most widely accepted Creeds teach, as in the Westminster Confession of Faith, that all the posterity of Adam have at birth "a corrupted nature," and that while "elect infants" and "other elect persons are saved," "others not elect cannot be saved;" and again, as in the Episcopal Thirty-Nine Articles, that "original sin is the fault and corruption of the nature of every man, and therefore that, in every person born into the world, it deserveth God's wrath and damnation."

Christ "took the little children up in his arms and blessed them, and said, Of such is the kingdom of heaven;" "Except ye become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven;" and "Their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."

Some of the Creeds — the Westminster Confession of Faith, and all those based upon it — say that man is "wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body," "utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil."

Christ in the parable of the sower represents our human nature in which the seed is sown as having its wayside, its stony places, and its thorns, but, also, as having its good ground which is capable of bringing forth thirty, sixty, and a hundred-fold; and, in the parable of the Prodigal Son, represents that when man sins he is not acting in accordance with his true nature, but going away from it, and that when he repents he "comes to himself;" and Paul the follower of Christ, though uttering many strong expressions about inherited depravity, says that "the Gentiles, who have not the law, do by nature the things written in the law, and show the work of that law which is written in the heart," and that, though he sees another law in his members warring against the law of his mind, yet he "delights in the law of God after the inward man."

Some of the Creeds say that "man by his fall into sin hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation."

Christ says, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak;" and Paul asserts, "To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not."

The Creeds generally make the first and greatest commandment, and the one thing on which hang all the law and the prophets, to be the acceptance of the atoning merits of a crucified Redeemer.

Christ teaches that the first and greatest commandment is to love God with all the heart and soul and mind and strength, and that on this, with the kindred one of love to our neighbor, hang all the law and the prophets.

The Creeds assert that the repentance and confession of sins are not enough without a trust in the blood of Christ to procure the sinner's forgiveness.

Christ preached, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" there is "joy in heaven over one sinner that repented;" and, through his disciples, that, "if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Even the old Hebrew prophet could say, "If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, and all his transgressions shall not be mentioned unto him."

One of the Creeds says that "men not professing the Christian religion cannot be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature and the law of that religion they do profess; and to assert and maintain that they may is very pernicious, and to be detested."

Christ says that at last all nations shall be gathered before the Son of Man, and that he will say to those on his right hand who have fed the hungry, and given drink to the thirsty, and clothed the naked, and visited the sick, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me; come inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the founda-

tion of the world." And his apostles preached, "I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted of him."

The Creeds say that man's personal righteousness and good works, though required after conversion, are of no value in working out salvation, but that "the works done by unregenerate men are sinful, and displeasing in the sight of God."

Christ says, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;" "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven;" "The man who heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, is like unto a wise man that built his house on a rock." And his apostles say, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do;" "Whatsoever good thing ANY MAN doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord;" and "If ye do these things, ye shall never fall, for SO an entrance shall be administered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

The Creeds say that the only way in which man can be saved is by the substitution of Christ's punishment in the place of ours, and by having his righteousness imputed to us.

Christ says that "the Son of Man shall reward every man according to his works;" Paul, that "every man shall give an account of himself to God;" and Ezekiel, that righteousness and wickedness cannot be transferred back and forth from one person to another, but that "the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him and the wickedness of the wicked upon him."

The Creeds say that the atonement consisted in “the reconciliation of God to man,” and that blood was necessary to expiate the Divine wrath.

Christ represents God as a Father standing at the eternal door, and, while his repentant children are yet a great way off, going out under the promptings of his own love to forgive and receive them; and Paul declares that “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself;” “All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself;” “Christ hath suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.”

The Creeds say that damnation is the future punishment of the soul amid the torments of hell.

Christ says, “This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light.”

Some of the Creeds say that God hath foreordained some men and angels unto everlasting life and some unto everlasting death, and that their number cannot be increased or diminished; and they teach generally that all human beings, whether in heathendom or Christendom, who do not accept the merits of a crucified Redeemer in this life, even those who have never heard of him, shall be lost in hell for ever, without chance of escape.

Christ teaches the certainty of eternal punishment, but uses the word “eternal” as referring to its kind, and not its length. He himself says, as the result of his work, “If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me;” the words of the Bible are over and over again that “The mercy of the Lord endureth forever;” and the apostle who had Christ’s mind proclaims that “At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

FOURTH SERIES.]

[No. 26.

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

BY

THOMAS STARR KING.



AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

BOSTON

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ETERNAL PUNISHMENT.

I do not approach this subject with any desire to lighten the sense of the evil of sin; or to intimate that the four Gospels, by any possible interpretation, patronize or justify any theory that seems lenient towards an unconsecrated life. There can be no religion worthy of the name, which does not imply and assume that the distance between right and wrong is immeasurable. The difference in worthiness and health, in quality and tendency, between a man who lives in the choice of evil, and a man who lives in loyalty, charity, and aspiration, cannot be fully expressed by any imagery drawn from space. Such persons are in opposite conditions. The one is in harmony with God,—with all his justice and all his love. The other is at discord with the truth of things, and with the nature, will, and mercy of the Infinite Father.

It is no part of a religious teacher's office to make such things as lying and stealing, lust and avarice, pride and slander, drunkenness and slavery, wrong voting and indifference of any kind to the rights and welfare of humanity, look otherwise than heinous and hateful. It is his office, as it is a prominent office of the New Testament, to interpret the dreadfulness of a selfish will, and an impure and callous heart. Living in such vices, we ought to see that we live in alienation from God, and, in greater or less degree, in

the state which the Scripture calls “death.” The mission of the pulpit and of the New Testament is discharged by leading us to see what bondage, and misery, and deepening spiritual peril, attend depraved affections and evil habits as God regards them from his perfect freedom and purity; and by supplying the motives and forces that will restore us to inward harmony and reconciliation with God.

It is not, therefore, our primary duty, as Christians, to calculate the duration of the punishment of sin. We are rather to appreciate the wrong it does to ourselves, the mischief it works in the world, the offence it offers to the holy love of the Infinite, and the distance it creates between us and him. This, I believe, was the custom and tone of the thought of Jesus Christ. To rise into fellowship with his feeling about evil, we must banish conceptions of the duration of its penalty, or even of the pain that may attend it. We must learn to measure its wretchedness by the state to which it tends to sink the spirit, in which — and just so long as the state endures — all the laws and the very beneficence of the universe are hostile to it. If Christianity had not been perverted from the directions in which the language of Jesus pointed, we should not be involved in such sad discussions, as we are now often forced into, concerning the duration of punishment.

Ordinary Orthodoxy tells men that, unless they live according to a certain scheme of thought and service in this life, a *doom* of misery will be executed upon them in the life to come, from which God will not allow them any escape or return. This is the doctrine with which we take issue.

The ordinary Universalist conception is, that Christ has revealed, with definiteness and fulness, as one of

the central and textual doctrines of his religion, that the punishment of the wicked is to cease at a certain time, and that all will be restored to purity and joy.

The Orthodox doctrine is, to my mind, dreadful and monstrous. Nothing, it seems to me, has wrought, or can work, so much damage to Christianity, as the belief that, by the decree of God, this life is the final probation of all souls for an eternal destiny. Such a limitation of mercy, such a doctrine of doom, such a theory of mechanical separations, and of judicial, never relaxing retribution in the world to come, forbids any pure conception or powerful preaching of the essential evil of sin and vice, and turns attention to external and arbitrary penalties and perils. It corrupts our philosophy of the divine government. It breeds distrust and gloom, and slavish fear, and scepticism. It sets Christianity at war with our constitutional instincts of justice and charity.

And yet I freely say that I do not find the doctrine of the ultimate salvation of all souls clearly stated in any text, or in any discourse, that has been reported from the lips of Christ. I do not think we can fairly maintain that the final restoration of all men is a prominent and explicit doctrine of the four Gospels. We needlessly narrow the grounds of opposition to Sacrificial Orthodoxy, by attacking it from such a position. *This* we can say with assurance and emphasis: The doctrine of Eternal Punishment, as a judicial penalty, is utterly opposed to the *principles* of the religion of Jesus. We need nothing more than the conception he has given us of God, to make us sure that no spirit will ever be debarred from returning to allegiance whenever it desires; that there can be no period in eternity when the Infinite arms will not be wide open for any

prodigal, penitent and poor, that longs to escape from his miserable husks. There is no doom that will ever prevent this. And if we know that the love of God will never be withdrawn from any soul he has made; if we feel sure that the tremendous justice he has organized in the spiritual universe is secretly related to the health of the vilest man, our hearts can be at rest as to the problem of divine order.

The religion of Jesus does inspire this confidence in God. When we read it rightly, it forbids us to limit his mercy within this short life. There is nothing final in the divine government of souls. Into whatever district of the universe we move, we are in the embrace of perfect justice and perfect love. Seeing this truth clearly, Jesus did not attempt to write for us a calendar, or cipher the arithmetic of retribution. He endeavored rather to make men feel that an evil state is the worst thing in the universe; and that, so long as they remain in it, they are aliens from the Infinite love, who always desires their repentance and return.

The mission of Christ was to publish principles and pour regenerative life into the race; leaving it to our reason to balance truths, dispose them into system, and draw out all their logical contents. He taught men the infinite goodness of God, and how to interpret his goodness. He unfolded the majestic and constant laws of the blessed life, and of the life to which a wrong choice tends. He disclosed the inmost evil of sin, and in what the deepest sin consists, and the path out of it into liberty and peace. He lived to illustrate the possibilities of our nature and the excellence of God; in order thus to leave in the world the germ of a sacred future for humanity, and of a church that should

triumph over all social iniquity. There is no argument for the final triumph of goodness recorded in the four Gospels, nor any dogmatic textual assertion of that doctrine ; but all the principles glow there, vivid as the sunlight, that are required to give us the most consoling trust in God through eternity, and the most cheering hope for man.

Do you say, how shall we know what Christianity is, — how shall we get the instruction and comfort of revelation, from documents that are so fragmentary, and that use language with such poetic license ? I answer, that God never intended to save us from the duties and responsibilities of individual thought. Providence, I believe, has made those fiery records so fragmentary, that we might be forced to disentangle *principles* from *imagery*, and unfold those principles by our own thought, and in harmony with all other truth we can gain, into the full proportions of Christian theology. Never reason from the imagery of Jesus mechanically, but from the principles of Jesus. Those principles plainly are, that God is an Infinite Spirit ; that he is infinitely good ; that the best qualities of humanity are but hints of his excellence ; that all souls are his children ; that evil is our most dreadful foe ; that God desires our rescue from it ; and that Christ is the expression of that desire, and of his holy and unchanging love.

If you want to know whether eternal punishment is to be inflicted as a penalty for the sins of this life ; if you want to know whether God will ever cease to desire, or refuse to receive, the repentance and allegiance of any spirit born from him, — ask yourself if such a thought is in harmony with these principles, which are

the vital points of Christ's teaching. We cannot conceive too seriously the ingratitude of evil ; the wrong which sin does to our own nature ; the offence it offers to the purity of God ; the peril which habits of evil, wrought into the constitution of our nature, induce, by sinking us away from the region of true life and blessedness. We may be sure, that, hereafter as well as here, the spiritual laws will be utterly hostile to every thing but goodness in us ; and that we shall suffer according to our denial of God, and our chosen distance from him. But so long as the principles of Christ's religion are to be trusted, God will be our best friend, and will desire nothing so much, throughout eternity, as the penitence, return, consecration, and joy of the most abandoned nature.

Christ has given us cardinal truths of a great religion to be worked out by ourselves into intellectual results. Whatever results those principles lead to, are just as much parts of Christianity as if he had covered pages of sacred parchment in writing them for us. And until the doctrine of everlasting vengeance for the sins of this life, to be executed at a day of judgment, can be made to flow from the idea of God, the unspeakable excellence and the infinite father, — yes, even from the idea of God the omnipotent justice, — we may be sure that it is a foul excrescence on the gospel, a malignant cancer in the fair organism of its truth. We may be sure of this, even though the fact that the seeming statements of it by Christ are vivid imagery were but a tithe as clear.

And now, brethren, one word more. Are any Christians so deeply interested in seeing that this passage in the twenty-fifth of Matthew is not literal statement, but poetic symbol, as the strict Evangelical

believers are? If that passage is an accurate prophecy of the test at a final judgment, what becomes of the sacrificial theology? Of course, the literalists will not shun here the consequences of their own principle. Of course they will not say that, if Jesus was calmly describing the scene and the tests of the final day, he omitted to allude to the real ground of justification, pardon, and acceptance. Yet those who are accepted, according to the passage in Matthew, are approved on grounds of character, of charity, of humble faithfulness in the discharge of simple humanities. No such tests are required for entrance into heaven as are necessary for membership in any Trinitarian Church. Is this the Orthodox judgment-day? Where is the doctrine of depravity; of inexpiable guilt before the law; of the necessity of the cross of Christ; of the worthlessness of human works as the ground of acceptance; of faith in an atoning blood as the sole condition of pardon and the hope of heaven? Did Jesus forget to allude to any feature of "the scheme of redemption," in his delineation of the scene, where it comes to its solemn climax? If that passage be literally true, there need be no more controversy about the sacrificial faith; for the whole system of Orthodoxy is riven to splinters by its awful lightning. And liberal Christianity, with the doctrine of eternal punishment added to enforce the preaching of works and character, as the condition of entering heaven, is enthroned as the gospel truth.

But when we appreciate the indefinite sense of the word rendered "everlasting;" when we see the fragmentary character of the records preserved to us from Christ's instruction; when we estimate aright the poetic constitution of his spirit, and find how much of his truth is stated in symbol; when we see especially how,

in regard to his coming to judgment, Jesus used language, often more intense, which in every other instance must be understood as poetry, if we would save him from the charge of delusion or fraud,— we learn how to read this language so as to be not terrified but inspired. We learn, as a fundamental truth, that God gives us revelation by methods of art, and not by methods of science. He suggests; he does not tell. He inspires; he does not inform. The prophet is a painter in symbol, never a mathematician or professor. And we look on this parabolic passage of the King in judgment as a picture drawn by the great master of spiritual truth, to shed through the imagination of the race upon its heart the lesson, that indifference to humanity is alienation from God; to color the truth that “God is love, and he who dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him;” and to enforce by the laws which rule eternity as well as time, the new commandment, “that he who loveth God, love his brother also.”

But it is said that we have no right to reason from human qualities as to what infinite equity may do. Then, we answer, why attempt to show the reasonableness of eternal punishment at all? It is only by finding some common ground between the infinite nature and ours, that the reasonableness of the penalty can be discussed. You may say that a blind man can know nothing of art. Surely, then, you will not attempt to argue with him about the propriety of Raffaelle’s use of colors. If God is simply infinite power, and acts from sovereign pleasure,— or if infinite justice is something different in its nature from partial justice, as bitter is different from sweet,— then it is impossible for us to

argue from one to the other. But if God does not act from sovereign caprice, and if infinite justice is unspeakably purer in quality than finite justice, then the only way to conceive it, or reason about it at all, is by ascending to it, and testing it by means of the best traits and principles that are known and established among men. The Bible only uses the *words* justice, purity, and love in regard to our Maker. It gives us no external revelation of the *things*. These we are to conceive and measure precisely by our knowledge of what such sacred qualities are in men. To smother the light of our own nature, in order to receive all our principles from revelation, is, therefore, as some one has said, to put out our eyes that we may study the stars. Moreover, we are sure that God made our reason and our hearts. We cannot be so sure that he is the author of the Bible. So that, if we find insoluble discord between the two, there can be little question which must and ought to yield. . . .

It is contended, however, that there are analogies to be drawn from the divine government in this world that help us to conceive the reasonableness of eternal misery as a penalty of God's law. It is no proof, we are told, that God will not execute such a doom because he is good, and because he is a Father. He kills men by tornadoes and by pestilence, and by volcanic convulsions. His judgments are a great deep. . . .

Now, this argument, if it has any force, means this: God drowns men now; therefore he will do something infinitely worse than drown them for ever. He allows them, sometimes, to be torn in pieces here; therefore it is not improbable that he has built a boundless inquisition, as the substructure of nature, where the rack will be for ever plied, and which walls out every ray of light

and hope. He kills men, perhaps in thousands, by an earthquake, when the terror and the pains may last five minutes; therefore, it is reasonable to expect that he will shake the whole foundations of this world's order under them, and drop them by myriads into perpetual flame.

Take notice, brethren, with what unerring instinct the sacrificial theology runs to the anomalies and exceptions in God's government here, to bolster and enforce its theory of providence. Liberal Christianity reasons from the general laws and broad beneficence of the universe to the character of God; from the wide beauty, the solid foundations for general good, the sun that shines on the evil and the righteous, the rain that falls upon the unjust and the just. But wherever there is an apparent irregularity, and a seeming inconsistency with the stable and generous bounty and order,—an eclipse, a pestilence, an accident, a catastrophe, a mystery,—you will find the evangelical logic fastening on it, and attempting, not to harmonize it with the general light, but to centralize it as a principle. James Martineau has vigorously said of this argument: “Disorders are selected and spread out to view as specimens of the divine government of nature; the mysteries and horrors which offend us in the popular theology are extended by their side; the comparison is made, point by point, till the similitude is undeniably made out; and, when the argument is closed, it amounts to this: Do you doubt whether God could break men's limbs? You mistake his strength of character: only see how he puts out their eyes!” Of course, the only effect of such logic, where it is thoroughly received, is to make men doubt whether there is a perfect providence over the universe.

As to these exceptional cases of sinking steam-ships, and wrathful volcanoes, and destructive earthquakes, and innocence involved in misery with the guilty, or by the guilty, this is what liberal Christianity says: We do not pretend to show the *results* of perfect order here. We only claim to show the *laws* of a perfect order, and the tendency to it here. Orthodoxy shows neither a perfect order, nor the laws of it, nor any tendency to it; but anarchy in this world as the prelude to systematic, organized anarchy for ever. . . .

Ah! brethren of the sacrificial church, should you not beware how you thus imperil the glory of God; how you deny that charity is the law and the life of the heavens; how you blacken thus with impure logic the truth, that self-sacrifice and living for others is the highest divineness, even within the holiest of holies in the universe? The doctrine of eternal punishment, which starts with implicating the character of God, ends by spoiling the glory of Christ's love; for it demands that we should consider his dignity as superior to his compassion, and to affirm that he would not have been willing to suffer as much as thousands of finite natures have suffered, to lift from the world any thing less than everlasting woe.

We contend, indeed, that, if the doctrine of no repentance, no possibility of spiritual improvement, among the degraded hereafter be true, Christ was *not* the incarnation or the manifestation here of God's eternal love. The Infinite is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. If he can forgive your sin to-day, he can forgive it ten thousand years from now. Your danger is in yourself,—the soiling of your soul, the tightening of your habits, the lowering of your desires, the weakening of your will, the antipathies you are forming and

strengthening to the fellowship of the infinite. If God in himself is to be less cordial and gracious to his children in the next life than he is here, or than Jesus was here, then we say that there has been no incarnation of eternal love. Christ is not the expression of what God *is*, but is merely the mask of mercy which God wears towards our race during this brief life, and which he tears from his face when we pass beyond the tomb.

The horror of this thought! Let us not deal *any* longer with it. This doctrine of eternal punishment for the sins of this life desecrates all sanctities, and sucks us down into an atmosphere thick with inspirations of sacrilege. It is a hideous dream. It was born in heathenism. It is a pagan nightmare, oppressing the slumber of our cowardly Christian thought. . . .

Let us leave its murky air, and rise into the light of nature and of the principles of the religion of Jesus. You will find no comfort in this healthier atmosphere for your sin and any deliberate impiety of habit and heart. Everywhere God levels the bayonets of law around your evil. Everywhere he preaches to you that sin is your only foe; and that your sweetest life, your only stable peace, is in reconciliation with him, and openness to his holy spirit and love. But no attribute of his can be your enemy. You may be alien from him, and may resist him, and deny him, and curtain yourself from him by the thick blankets of your passions. But he cannot hate you. Your inward distress and torment are his medicine; the distrust of him which your guilt breeds is one of his thrilling revelations. Do not believe that his justice can ever be your foe.

Much of the confusion in the reasoning and scheme that we have been speaking of results from wrong conceptions of what the penalties of divine law and justice

are. They are not troubles to come externally upon the soul,— terrors and forfeits from which we must be relieved by a foreign expiation. They are internal, vital, and affect the quality of the soul itself. They are analogous to the retributions of ignorance upon the mind, and the penalties of carelessness and excess upon the body. No one dreams that the sin of an un-exercised intellect, of gross ignorance, can be pardoned only through faith in the sacrifice of some incarnation of the Perfect Reason. No one expects to be told that the violation of the bodily laws can be forgiven by the Infinite Creator, only on the ground that some perfect physician honors them by obedience and death. It is by opening the mind persistently to God's published truth, and by conformity to the discovered physiological order, or the reception of the adopted remedy, that the mind and the frame experience new life. And our souls are redeemed, not by or through any expiation, on account of which penalties are lifted, but by reception of divinely given, spiritual truth and consecration of will that push away penalties by wholesome life.

The first penalty of the violation of God's law is the shadow cast before the soul when we turn our back upon it. The next is the change in the quality of the spirit itself,— a change which alters the universe to us, — if we live steadily in its shadow. Turn towards the law again, face its splendors, and the shadow falls behind you. God's justice is your help and light then. Although you cannot escape, for a long time, the inward penalties of your former violation, it helps you to eradicate them ; and you are at peace with the infinite personal source of law.

Brethren, we need a religion that shall have no fear of the justice of God for ever ; but boundless confidence

in it, rather. It is heathen to ask for an interest in Christ, in order to be shielded from God's law. If you are a sinner, seek deliverance from yourself, but not from God's law, or from God. Face his law. Ask for its searchings and scourge. Even if you are about to die, be not afraid of infinite justice. To slip away from it would be your only danger. It is inseparably mixed with God's love, as the gravitation of the sun with its light and heat.

Pray that you may come into harmony with it; for it is the basis and the strength of all order, here and for ever. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. Sweeter are his judgments than honey or the honeycomb. By them are his servants warned, and in keeping of them there is great reward."

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

BY BROOKE HERFORD.

"THE DAY OF . . . REVELATION OF THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT
OF GOD." — *St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans.* I. 5.



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BOSTON.

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“The Conference recognizes the fact that its constituency is Congregational in tradition and polity. Therefore, it declares that nothing in this Constitution is to be construed as an authoritative test ; and we cordially invite to our working fellowship any who, while differing from us in belief, are in general sympathy with our spirit and our practical aims.”

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

IN the passage quoted on the title-page, notice that St Paul speaks not of "the Day of Judgment," but of the "Day of *Revelation* of Judgment." It is only a small difference in word, and yet it is a difference which goes to the very heart of the deepest truth in the matter of retribution and judgment.

There has come of late an unmistakable dislocation between the old religious idea of judgment as ordinarily held by the churches, and the ideas which are growing up from increasing observation of nature and life. What has usually been considered the religious idea of judgment is that of a great settling-day, once for all, when men pass out of this world into the life to come; and this has been, moreover, strained and exaggerated into the doctrine that every soul is then irrevocably sentenced either to eternal heaven or eternal hell. Of late, however, all this doctrine has been breaking down. It could not stand against the higher thoughts to which men have been coming, of the wisdom and love of that Almighty Life that is back of all things. First, the dogma of the sentence of that judgment-day being final and absolutely unalterable, went,—that doctrine of the eternity of hell was too horrible to be believed; and, in spite of all bolstering up by church councils and votes of clerical meetings here and there, it has passed out of the living faith of thoughtful Christian people. But, following on this, even the idea of a future judgment-day at all has come

to be a difficulty with many. It seems to jar with the sense of the silent, unceasing working of law. Is it possible, thoughtful men are asking, that that mighty Divine Life should be only like man,— letting his sinful creatures go on for a while, and then “fetching up” the arrears of retribution by a formal judgment-day and a special sentence? Is not His judgment in reality always working, always accomplishing perfect justice in all things, if we could only see it? And yet it is hard to put aside all those solemn warnings of Christ as meaningless. Was it, then, all a mistake in him to put it to men as such a sorrowful and awful thing to pass on into the after-world from a sinful, selfish, unrepentant life here? Thus many people are perplexed.

Now, I love this word of Paul’s about the “day of the revelation of judgment,” because it seems to touch, with a little flash of inspired insight, the larger truth in which both of these ideas meet and blend. It implies a distinction between the judgment of God and the time when that judgment comes to be fully known and felt. Let it be, as it surely must, that the real judgment of God, the deep moral sequence of all action, works itself out absolutely, right as we go along. Paul’s word says nothing against this. Yet none the less is it true that often it is not “revealed” now. Much of the deepest judgment, that is ever silently working itself out by all these divine laws of being, is utterly unknown at the time. Men are unconscious of it in themselves. Their fellows are blind to it. So here comes in the solemn significance of that thought,— “the day of the revelation of judgment.” When we come to realize what that means, what it must be for the life to pass out of the disguise and self-delusion of earth, to stand in the light there where there are no secrets,— where the life is just what it has grown to be, and where, for the first time, it is fully and finally conscious of

that,—is there any warning Christ ever spoke about the awfulness of judgment that is too strong for that? And will the awfulness of the way in which it must come upon sinful souls be any the less, because in reality it is not a judgment then first given, but the revelation of a judgment, which has been growing in them all through life?

Let us look into this a little more closely. Try to realize, first of all, the awful certainty of that righteous will and law that is always working itself out. We want to keep in view the idea of *present* judgment,—not special judgment, but universal. That common idea of *special* judgments just perverts and belittles the mighty fact. When a theatre takes fire, good people talk about “a judgment.” Well and good, if they will only understand that it is a judgment simply on the way the theatre was built or managed. Only, the truth is larger: every fire is a judgment; every accident or catastrophe is a judgment,—a judgment for the wrong or careless or ignorant handling of those awful edge-tools, the forces of Nature. All life, all being, all becoming, is growth,—growth which is alive with moral meaning, moral will and sequence. The harvest is a judgment on the sowing. Every finished work is a judgment on the way it has been done. Look where we will, we find the indication of this mighty fact,—not as something that works by fits and starts, but that is working constantly, a “power that makes for righteousness,” a judgment that goes silently, inexorably on, in every outcomeing of man’s activity, and that surely is not less certain in the growth and becoming of man’s life itself!

In a great part of life, we can see the judgment. A great deal of the moral sequence of conduct comes right out into view. For, this is God’s world, and body and soul, material and spiritual, man’s character and man’s future are strangely interwoven and linked together

How many years' purchase is a throne worth, that is won by bloodshed and remorseless ambition? History tells many a grand tale of how that strange harvest which wrong-doing bears will crop up even through the marble floors of palaces. And so it is in common life. The proverbs of men own this constantly: "Murder will out;" "Easy got, easy gone." It is mostly the idle, shiftless man who has all the bad luck. It is the unsettled, unreliable tradesman, always "waiting for something to turn up," who thinks the world is against him, and complains that he never has a chance. The upright, honest man, if also of fair skill and perseverance, seldom fails—I do not say to get rich,—that can hardly be counted the fair end of man's life,—but to get a living, and to find the world not a very bad world to him, on the whole. So palpably is this the case, upon the broad view even of this present life, that, curiously, the one people of the older world who looked no further than the present life,—the Jews,—are the people who were animated by the strongest sense of the moral providence of God. "Behold," they said, "the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more, the wicked and the sinner." So struck were they with the moral working-out of life, even on the limited time-view of men and things!

But now, see! all this continual, unceasing working-out of judgment, and the visibility of a great deal of it, does not affect this fact: that a great deal of the judgment is *not* at once visible, is not at once known, only comes visibly out in some "day of the revelation of judgment." It is so even in material things: it is still more so in lives. A farmer sows poor seed, and neglects his hoeing and weeding into the bargain. The judgment goes working on every hour; but it is only when he reaps, and comes to sell, that the revelation of the judgment comes

to him. Market-day is the judgment-day in that thing. You build your wall out of the perpendicular, or with bad mortar. Probably it is "giving" all the time. Judgment is going slowly, inexorably on, from the moment you have finished it. But you say, "Oh, it is a good enough wall!" Some day it falls,—that is the judgment-day! A young man is idle and careless at his work, not very bad, but not up to the mark. He does not "take hold," barely earns his salary,—hardly that. Some day a pinch comes, or a change: trade is bad,—he is the first to go; or there is an opportunity for some one to rise, but he cannot have it! That is the judgment-day to him. Here is a man trading on bad principles: probably an accountant could read his fate in almost every item of business, every entry in his books. Some day the crash comes. That is the "judgment-day" to him, and yet in reality it is merely the day of "the revelation of judgment."

But it is in the realm of our very life, not of men's works or fortunes or positions, but of the very life itself which is in them, that all this is most strikingly true; because, in this inner realm of the life, soul, character,—whatever it is which constitutes our immortal, conscious being,—though judgment is always working, as in every thing else, there is still less of it that comes out as we go along. Something of it comes out. The life in us works outwardly to some extent. It often writes something of its judgment, day by day, in face and feature. The passions tell their tale. The muddled, bloated face of intemperance; the keen, ferret look of the covetous; the coarse animal features of the profligate; and, in lesser degree, the showy affectation of the vain, the simpering silliness of the frivolous,—these are all revelations of judgments which do not wait for any special day. And, on the other hand, goodness of every kind reveals itself, reveals something of its judgment as

life goes on: thoughtfulness, with its look of intelligence; integrity, in the open eye which can “look the whole world in the face;” kindness and gentleness, that touch the countenance with qualities which little children and dumb animals can read there. But still, all these things are only signs and tokens of the judgment that is working silently, upwards and downwards, in the life within. They are not complete disclosures of it. And the awful thing is that there is another side, even to this. In man’s earthly existence, if there is often a partial disclosure of the life, there are also great facilities for disguise, not merely for men to disguise themselves from others, but even for themselves. This is, perhaps, the most awful thing in this human life of ours,—the power which we have of self-deception, of acting a part till we believe we *are* what we pretend to be. What poor, empty, worthless souls are often disguised in this world’s trappings of wealth and rank, till they really believe themselves great things! Lives rotten to the core in sin and pollution, decked out in titles, set in high places, fancying themselves quite other than common clay; coarse, grovelling souls, getting, year by year, grosser, less capable of any but the poorest pleasures, and yet strutting on with a sense of importance before the world, receiving the greetings of men with pleased self-complacency, dully unconscious of their own emptiness and degradation, or vain, frivolous creatures, taken up with dress and pleasure; perhaps church-goers at a fashionable church, but without one earnest thought like Jesus Christ’s, and yet quite looking upon themselves as Christians, and not having a doubt about their being quite superior people! Had Dives, in his “purple and fine linen,” “faring sumptuously every day,” any idea what he was growing into? His judgment was growing in him all along,—the judgment of a useless, self-indulgent life, of which, when it was

over; there was nothing to record except its sumptuous fare and its fine linen ; but he would not know it ! How should he know it,— a rich, respectable citizen, living in a fine house, with his five brethren, with plenty of friends sharing his sumptuous fare and regarding him as a pleasant, easy-going gentleman ? Would he ever compare himself, any more than his friends compared him, to the lame beggar, Lazarus, who came to his gate for broken meat, or dream that Lazarus might be the better man, the one really to be envied ? Absurd ! Lazarus might be a worthy person for his position. “ By all means, don’t turn him away, give him the scraps, and see that the dogs don’t hurt him.” So Dives would say, in the careless, prosperous way of a man who had no occupation in life except to enjoy himself, but never dreaming of Lazarus being one between whom and himself any real comparison could possibly be instituted. And yet all the time Lazarus was truly the worthier ; and, when they both died, it was not that God then judged them, and sent Lazarus to heaven and Dives to hell : it was that each found himself in that state into which he had been growing in his life, and it is between those *states*, far more than between any possible *places*, that there is that “ great gulf fixed,” which is so hard to overpass.

Now it is this awful facility which the world affords for disguise and self-deception about the judgment which is always working in soul and character, which gives such a force of meaning to Christ’s parables of judgment, and especially to that finer distinction of Paul’s,— “ the day of the revelation of judgment.” For, all that disguise and self-deception are only things of the present. They are of the body and the dress and the worldly position As men pass on, one by one, through that “ dim partition of unconsciousness,” as Sears calls it, which is all that separates this life from the life to come, all that disguise

simply drops away. All life's show and sham, all that is not of the life itself, stays *this* side! *That* is the judgment-day, the awful daylight of that world where secrets are no longer hid, and every soul stands simply for what it has grown to be. That is the judgment-day: not because God sits there, sentencing souls to this place or that, but simply because it is *day*, — clear light, — no longer darkness or twilight or any deceptive thing, but day, truth. Not the day of any new judgment, — no need to think of that, — “the day of the revelation of judgment.” But what a day of revelation! How many a one who has made a goodly show on earth must then stand forth such a mean, shrivelled, degraded soul as the angels will shudder to behold! How many a one who has sinned some great sin, or lived some life-long lie, will then appear in that light, just for what he is, the sin, the lie all visible, — his life almost shaped into that, as it were! How many a one who has just repented at the last, after a life of selfishness or vice, and thought that the work of salvation was all done for him, and that he should get through all right “in the judgment,” will find that it is no question of getting through; that his judgment is simply what he takes with him, that which has been growing in himself, in his life, silently but surely year after year, and which no momentary repentance can undo. And before all stretches eternity, — endless reaches of life; life that there is no running away from; life that there is no forgetting; life in which the future still keeps working the judgment of the past; life in which only goodness, kindness, purity, love, are Heaven; life in which passion, greed, selfishness and sin are always Hell!

Does it need images of fire and demons to make that awful? Why, there is no word Christ ever spoke, of all those awful parables in which he tried to waken men to the dreadfulness of passing on, hardened, blind, and sinful,

to that eternity,— no word so awful as the bare reality of continued, indestructible life itself, in the light of these thoughts of moral sequence and retribution which science and philosophy themselves bring home to us. The idea of judgment, busy in a man's own soul all through life, and there revealed, may not at first sight seem so fearful as the old notion of souls then being sent, once for all, if not to Heaven, then to Hell. But it is more awful. There is more certainty about it, even while there is more hope. It may not close the final possibilities of life. These moral judgments of God, in this world, and surely in the world to come as well, are forces which "make for righteousness," not for retribution only, but for righteousness. Beyond all that we can think, lies still the mercifulness of God and the free will of man. But this does not lessen the awful certainty close at hand. The old doctrine of Hell, as a place to be sentenced to, defeats itself. No one realizes it. Every one thinks he shall just manage to pass, that somehow God will find him some way of mercy. Besides, the whole scheme of Orthodoxy favors this idea of escape. Let a man's sins have been never so great, he is taught that Christ bore the punishment of them; and that, if he will only believe this, he has nothing else to do. From that moment, he may feel sure of heaven. Thus, the common idea of hell looks supremely dreadful; but any one can get right round it. Look, however, at this great truth, as Paul teaches it; and all the uncertainty is gone. There is no getting round this, no evasion, no escape! Man does not go to judgment in the next world: he takes his judgment with him there. The state in which he finds himself is not something he is sentenced to, but simply what he has grown into. If he feels it hell, it is simply what his soul has been growing into all through life; the only difference being that *here* he did not know it, hardly felt any thing of it, and that *there* he *does* know it, cannot

get away from the feeling of it. There is no tampering with this. It is not a question of whether God may not be merciful. It is the Mercifulness which is at the heart of the Almighty that causes this to be. It is not a question of whether Christ is or is not a Saviour. He *is* the Saviour, if we will believe in him and be made righteous by him here; but not our Saviour to get men passed into heaven upon some legal fiction of his merits and righteousness being transferred to them. Righteousness cannot be transferred. It can only grow in us, and it is a slow, gradual growth, too. If a man goes on into that spirit-world with his soul dwarfed and mean and worldly, no heaven could be heavenly to him. One of the most striking passages in Swedenborg is where he speaks of this. In one of those strange meditations of his, in which he thought himself actually in the spirit-world, he says: "There were some who believed that they should easily receive divine truths after death, when they heard them from the angels, and that they should then believe them, amend their lives, and be received into heaven." And he goes on to tell how he saw that the experiment was tried on great numbers of them. They wished that "the life of the love they had contracted in the world"—what a significant word!—"should be taken away from them, and that the angelic life, the life of heaven, might be infused into its place." But it could not be. When it was tried, the only result was "they lay as if dead:" they could receive no other life, could live no other life, but their own. Suppose it only a vision: it is a vision of wonderfully deep insight! And the meaning of it just comes to the same point as Paul's word: "The day of revelation of the righteous judgment of God."

This is not intended to fill us with dread of the future, but to awaken the true awe about the present. "Now is the day of salvation," says Paul: yes, because *now* is the

judgment-day. There may be no visible gathering of the nations, no palpable dividing of the sheep from the goats; no audible voice may speak the condemnation, "Depart from me!" or pronounce that blessed sentence, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" yet daily, hourly, in all the myriad lives that throng this world, that solemn parable is coming true, and men are passing, little by little, away from right, away from God, further and further from peace and blessedness, or, are "coming up higher," into that fuller, nobler life to which all true living ever tends. Brothers and sisters, which is it to be? Young men and maidens, which way is your life growing? Is it growing upwards or downwards? There is only one way for peace and joy. That better life to which Christ calls us is the happiest life even here: beyond, it is the only life that is not misery and woe and shame. Begin it now! Whatever is wrong, clear it away now! Said Mahomet, "Better to blush in this world than in the world to come." Whatever is evil, whatever will not bear the light, clear it away now, even though it be like cutting off the right hand or plucking out the right eye! Then is life true; and it will grow upwards, and find blessing as it grows, and be like the pathway of the just "**that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.**"

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[No. 28.

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BY

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.



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WHY AM I A UNITARIAN.

'But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers.'—ACTS xxiv. 14.

WHY am I a Unitarian? Why are we Unitarians? Is it because we like to stand apart from the rest of the Christian Church? Is it because there is any special pleasure or satisfaction in being known as heretics? Is it because we would not enjoy as others enjoy being in the sympathy and in the brotherhood of the whole Christian Church? By no means. We should all like that. We are not Unitarians, and do not call ourselves Unitarians, because there is any special pleasure in standing thus alone and apart from our brethren whom we respect and honor, though they differ from us. Why, then, did the early Unitarians in this country; why did he who first professed himself avowedly a Unitarian in this city and in this country, Dr. Freeman; why did William Ellery Channing and Henry Ware; the late revered and beloved James Walker of Cambridge, and Francis William Pitt Greenwood, that pure apostolic soul,—why did these come out from the rest of the Christian Church and stand apart? It was because they thought that it was necessary to bear witness to some truths which they believed had been neglected or forgotten, and they were willing to encounter any possible obloquy or opposition in the defence of what seemed to them to be important truth. And now I propose to show you why some of us still believe the same, and think that the time for this protest against

many of the popular doctrines of the Christian Church is not over.

Perhaps some present may say, "What do you mean when you speak of a Unitarian? Unitarians have no creed, and, therefore, they have no common belief at all. There is nothing which can be represented as Unitarian belief, since there is among them no fixed or avowed creed." It is very true, that, for reasons which I shall presently state, we have not any formal creed or Confession of Faith; but it does not by any means follow from this that we have no common belief. There may be a common belief when there is no definite, precise, or formal statement of it. Take a great party, for instance, like the Democratic party, or the Republican party; they have no Thirty-nine Articles, they have no Confession of Faith; nevertheless, they have a belief. There are certain great ideas which unite them together, and which make their faith. Suppose that you should go into one of our universities, and should find there certain professors calling themselves geologists, teachers of geology; or of chemistry; or of astronomy; and you should say to them, "Where are your Thirty-nine Articles of astronomy? Where is your Confession of Faith of chemistry?" and they should reply, "We have nothing of the sort." "Why, then, you cannot have any common belief; the astronomers in one university probably teach an entirely different doctrine from the astronomers in another; and so do the chemists and geologists." "No," they would answer, "we have a common belief, which is determined by certain convictions which we all share, certain knowledge which we all possess; and, though we may differ in details from each other, you will find that the professors of astronomy in Oxford in England, and Cambridge in the United States, and in the University of Paris, teach essentially the same thing, though they have not formulated their

doctrines into any creed." You can express the union of men in a common faith in two ways, just as you can express the union of a flock of sheep in two ways. You can put a flock of sheep into a fold, and build a fence around it, and that will distinguish it from any other flock. You will say, "The flock that I refer to is in that fold." Or else you may say, "The flock of sheep which I refer to is the flock which has such a man for its shepherd." If you are travelling over the hills of Syria, you may see two great flocks of sheep coming from different directions, and meeting each other and passing each other; each with its shepherd at the head, each following its common shepherd, and never confounding themselves together, although they have no fence around them to separate them. And, so, parties in the Church and parties in the State can have a fence put around them, and you call it a creed; or they can be inwardly animated by the same great ideas which lead them as the shepherd leads his flock; and because they love these ideas, they are sufficiently identified in their faith.

We believe that there is a mischief in these fences which men set up and call creeds or articles, and therefore we refuse to submit to them or to accept them. The tendency of the creed, we think, is to prevent progress, because it defines beforehand the limits of opinion, and tells men before they begin to inquire what results they are to arrive at, and so prevents progress; as Lord Bacon long ago said, that "system, because it has a show of completeness, doth arrest men as if they were already at the farthest." And another difficulty about the creed is that it tends to hypocrisy. Far be it from me to say that those great denominations which have creeds are hypocrites. They are as honest, no doubt, as we are. Nevertheless, the tendency of the creed is that way. It is a remark which I have found in one of those charming

volumes of Mrs. Stowe, in which she put so many of the experiences of her early life, when she was in the habit of sitting, a quiet little girl, and noticing the conversation of the friends of her father, the Orthodox clergymen, who came to see him,— it is one of her remarks, that “it is a custom of theologians to assume that theology is a progressive science, and at the same time to maintain that we must hold exactly the same things which were held a hundred years ago.” Now, it is very true that you will find creeds which do not represent the present opinions of those who profess to hold the creeds. It would be very hard, I think, to-day, to find in the Presbyterian Church of the United States many clergymen who would teach the doctrine that infants dying in infancy were lost; and yet what does the creed say in respect to that? It says, “Elect infants shall be saved;” and it does not give us the least hope or promise that all children dying in infancy are elect, any more than they would all be elect were they to grow up and die then. And yet, though the creed certainly shows, as far as it shows any thing, that the Presbyterian Church believes in the damnation of a large proportion of infants, its members would be shocked and horrified if we were to accuse them of that. And it was not a great while ago, in a convocation of the Church of England,— which church ordains and commands that every one of its thirty thousand ministers shall, four times a year, read in the open church the creed of St. Athanasius, which ends by stating that all who do not believe its metaphysical distinctions shall without doubt perish everlasting,— that, in that convocation of the Church of England, a bishop arose and declared, without a single voice dissenting, that there was not a man in the whole body who believed that affirmation in the creed. Well, the tendency of all this is certainly toward hypocrisy; toward professing to believe what we do not believe.

And for these two reasons, because creeds tend to prevent progress of thought, and because they tend toward making men profess what they have ceased to believe, and have passed by, we reject them.

I am speaking to-night for myself; and yet I believe in speaking for myself I am speaking for many more. In saying why I am a Unitarian, I do not profess to say that others who are not Unitarians may not believe a great many things that I do, and believe them more fully than I do. But in giving my views to-night on this subject, I give this as one reason for my belief: that the views commonly held by Unitarians can all be stated in the simple, distinct language of the New Testament, while few of the opinions which we reject can be so stated. That is a reason for being a Unitarian, that we are able to state what we believe in the simple language of the New Testament; while the doctrines which we reject cannot be so stated. If we are asked to give our views concerning God, for instance, we can say, in the words of Scripture, "that though there be called gods many, yet to us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we in Him," and that "in Him we live and move and have our being;" that "He is light, and in Him is no darkness at all;" that "He is love, and whoso loveth dwelleth in God and God in him." And if we are asked to give our belief concerning Christ, we can also express that belief in the simple words of Scripture: "There is one Lord, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus;" "Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know." These are the expressions which define precisely our views concerning God and Christ; but while the New Testament teaches so plainly that the Father is the only true God, it nowhere teaches that there are three subsistences or three persons.

in God. It nowhere uses the word Trinity at all, or Triad, or Triune, in relation to God, these having all been subsequently invented for that purpose: but, moreover, it does not say anywhere that "The Father is God, and the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; and yet there are not three Gods, but one God." It does not anywhere say that Christ is God the Son, the second person in the Trinity. It nowhere teaches that when Christ prayed to God he was praying to himself; that when he was tempted, he was the being whom the Scriptures say cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempts any man that when he said, "I can do nothing of myself," what he meant was that he could do every thing of himself; that when he said, "My Father is greater than I," he meant by that to state that he was equal with God; and that when he says, "No man hath seen God at any time," the meaning of that is that Christ, whom so many had seen, was the unseen God. I am a Unitarian for this reason, to begin with: that we can state every one of our opinions in the plain, simple language of Scripture, while it is impossible to state the old doctrines in such language. You cannot state the doctrine of the Trinity in the language of the New Testament. You cannot state the deity of Christ in relation to the Trinity in the language of the New Testament. You cannot state the Calvinistic doctrine concerning sin — namely, of inherited guilt, of total depravity, of the imputation of Adam's sin — in the language of the New Testament. Therefore, it seems to me, we have an advantage here, as far as it goes. Moreover, it is very certain — at least it is certain to us — that if all the creeds, and all the teaching in accordance with the creeds, should cease to exist, and that if men should study only the New Testament, it would be impossible for them, by the simple reading of the New Testament, to find the doctrine of the Trinity or the deity of Christ in that volume.

We have seen many instances of the truth of this. I have myself known many persons who, having been educated to believe the doctrine of the Trinity from childhood, by the simple reading of the New Testament,—never having seen a Unitarian, never having read a Unitarian book, never having heard a Unitarian sermon, and some of them not knowing that there was any such person in the world as a Unitarian Christian,—have nevertheless come by the simple reading of the New Testament to the Unitarian belief, and have been very much amazed when they found that there were others besides themselves in the world holding that doctrine.

Another reason for being a Unitarian is,—and this, perhaps, may surprise some who have been accustomed to think that Unitarians believe correctly as far as they go, but that they do not go far enough,—another reason is, that our views enable us, as it seems to us, to believe *more* concerning God and Christ and the Bible and sin and salvation, than we could if we accepted the usual creeds of the Church. We are not Unitarians in order to believe less, but we are Unitarians because Unitarianism opens wide the gate through which we can pass up and on into higher, larger, and nobler truths. We can believe *more* in the power of redeeming love and redeeming grace, *more* in the beauty and glory of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I do not say that we are more religious, or that we have more faith than those who differ from us; but I do say that we have the power, if we use it aright, of going down into a deeper religion and going up into a higher faith than if we were bound by the creeds of the churches. Take, for example, the Trinity. We are able, as it seems to me, to believe more about God by omitting that doctrine; to have more faith in God, not less. For what is the Trinity but essentially a system of negations? The substance of the Trinity is this: that

you must not believe this on that side, and you must not believe this on the other side, but something indefinite and undefined between. The Trinity declares that, in the nature of the Deity, there are three persons, and that these three are one. But you must not suppose the three persons to be three persons in the sense in which three men are persons,—in which Peter and James and John are three persons. You must not go as far as that on that side, and on the other side you must not believe that three persons are only three manifestations or three relations, or three modes of action of the Deity; you must believe more than that on the other side, and somewhere between you must stand; but exactly where, we are never told. Now I say that to believe that is not to have a positive conviction, but only a negative belief. And if we demand the meaning of these terms,—subsistences, if you please,—if we demand to have the definition in order to believe it, we are told that it is a mystery; it is a great mystery. And then if we say, "If it is a mystery then we cannot believe it," we are told, "Why not believe a mystery? You believe a great many things that are mysterious. You believe that the grass grows, and *that* is a mystery. You do not know how it grows." Then to that we always make the same reply, and that reply, to my mind, is perfectly satisfactory, and I have never heard any answer to it; and yet it is never accepted as an answer. If we are told that we believe that the grass grows, and it is a mystery because we do not know how it grows, we reply that the fact that the grass grows is not a mystery; it is a simple fact which we perfectly understand. *How* it grows is a mystery, and therefore we do not believe any thing about the way in which the grass grows. We do not believe the *how*, because it is a mystery. We do believe that the grass grows; that is not a mystery. It is perfectly true, and

must always be true, according to the constitution of the human mind, that where mystery begins the belief ends; and it ends just at that point. Suppose we set aside this whole doctrine as something which is the work of man, — a system of metaphysics grown up in the Church; suppose we set it all aside, and then, instead of looking for God in this system of dialectics, in this logical puzzle, we open our eyes and minds and hearts, and we find Him everywhere in nature, in life, in all beauty, in all history. We see Him in the slow, majestic processes of creation; we see Him in the reaches of terrible power in the universe; we see Him in the immense revolutions of the stars, and in the wonderful structure of the little insect, just perceptible to the most powerful microscope, on the leaf of the little plant; we see Him in the long years which, in the geological ages, preceded the formation of this earth. Everywhere that divine power is working around us. We see it in all the beauty which is manifested in the mountains, clouds, and seas, and brooks, and sunrise; in all the history of the human race; in childhood, and youth, and society; in business, in pain, and in joy; in all the riches of the world; because in all of them there is some manifestation of the divine truth and love, and He has left no race and no family of mankind orphans, without some knowledge of Himself. And in the soul, in the distinction between right and wrong born in us all, in the vast idea of cause by which we go backward to the beginning of the universe, and in the great conception of the infinite by which we, little creatures of the dust and of the day, are able to reach out beyond all knowledge and all understanding, and grasp the eternal,—in all these we find Him. In this we have vastly more, not less, than in the belief that in the Godhead there are three persons, and that yet those three persons are not three Gods, but one God, and that a person is more than

a mode, but less than a personal man. Now we find God above, around, beneath, and within, and we gladly accept the great words of the poet, and say of Him —

“ All are but parts of one majestic whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul ;
Who, changed in all, and yet in all the same,
Great in the earth as in the starry frame ;
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees ;
Lives through all life, extends through all extent
Spreads undivided, operates unspent.
To Him no high, no low, no great, no small,
He fills, He bounds, connects, and blesses all.”

And thus, too, in rejecting the technical and theological doctrine of the deity of Christ, we do not believe Christ less divine, but more. To say that Christ is God, unless we know what we mean by it when we say it, does not show us God in Christ; does not make him a revelation of God. It is to see something divine in Christ which brings us to God; and that is what he came for — to bring us to God. To say that he is perfect God, and at the same time perfect man, confuses the mind, and leaves it in darkness and not in light. But we see something of God in Christ whenever we see that the goodness of this highest child of earth, of this greatest of all human souls which God ever sent into this world, that his goodness must be a revelation of the Maker, because he comes nearer to the Maker than any other; and, therefore, in his goodness, in his daily life, in the happiness of his soul, we study and find more and more of the Deity. When we accept him as a pure man, as a simple man, made in all things like his brethren, and yet without sin, then we know that man was not meant to be a sinner, and that God did not make it necessary for man to sin, and that the time is surely to come in which men following Christ

will rise above sin. When conscious of evil, conscious that we are ourselves sinners, doubting and distrusting the pardoning love of God, we open the New Testament, and we find Christ saying to the sinful woman, "Neither do I condemn thee ; go and sin no more"; when we find him saying, "Son, be of good cheer ; thy sins are forgiven thee," making no condition, but teaching that the moment we come in simplicity of heart, seeking for pardon, he loves to bestow it, in that we see something of the divine fatherly affection which comes to us through the eyes of Jesus, and shows to us that God also, when we come to Him with the same longing for pardon, will say, as Jesus said, "Son, be of good cheer ; thy sins are forgiven thee." And so we find more of God in Christ, not less, because we do not embarrass ourselves by these technical and theological distinctions, but accept him as he appears everywhere to be — a simple man — a man who, by the divine gift and help and inspiration, was able to rise till he came so near to God, that when we see him we catch something of the reflected light of the Deity shining in his face. An old English religious poet has said :—

"A man who looks on glass,
On it may stay his eye,
Or, if he pleases, through it pass,
And then the heavens espy."

Christ, as a man, is the glass. If we please, we can look on the glass, stay our eyes on that. Then we see his human character. Or we can look through the glass and see that he is a mediator of God, who shines through his mind and heart, and so fills us with a sense of the great Deity. So we are able to see more and not less of God in Christ, than if we held the common view.

And also, by setting aside all technical and theological views concerning the Holy Spirit, we can believe more

and not less in the Holy Ghost. To us, God is so near to the human heart, He is so full of overflowing love for man, and He is so ready to bestow the best gifts on his children, that it is a universal law, as universal and sure as the law of gravitation, that whenever we open our souls to Him, seeking for his influence and help, and for what is true and what is right, something of that divine life will pass into our souls ; that there is no accident in the gift of the Holy Spirit ; that it does not come here to-day and there to-morrow ; that it does not attend the path of some great revival ; that it is not monopolized by prophets, or saints, or the professors of any particular religion ; but that it is everywhere, just as the sun shines and the rain falls on the evil and on the good, whenever they are ready to receive it. So God's love, God's truth, the influence of his Holy Spirit, descends into the heart, whether of saint or sinner, good man or bad, orthodox or heretic, the moment he, looking up, opens his soul and says, "O Lord, help me to know thee, and be a better man !" Thus we can believe more and not less in the Holy Spirit ~~by~~ setting aside the old theology.

And we can believe, as it seems to me, more in the Bible and not less, by not believing in the verbal inspiration of the Bible. We believe that those who wrote the Bible were inspired men, led and filled by the power of God ; and we believe it because of the greatness of the book itself, because it has done so much and is doing so much. It must have God in it, else it could not do the work it has done. One of the chief proofs of the inspiration of the Bible is, that it is able to withstand the ten thousand perversions that have been put upon it. There is hardly an error or villany but has been defended out of the Bible. The Bible has been made in our time to defend slavery. The president of one of our New England colleges argued from the Bible, in a book which he

took occasion to write in the middle of the great struggle between freedom and slavery, — this orthodox president of one of the orthodox colleges of New England wrote a book, in which he argued that slavery was a divine institution ; and he almost went the length of saying what is logically to be implied, that we in New England were committing a sin against God because we did not hold slaves here. The Bible has been used to defend almost every wrong that man has ever practised on man. Most terrible doctrines have been taught out of it and defended out of it. Because Noah is reported, after he came out of the ark, to have cursed Canaan, it was argued that this is a proof that the negroes — who were not descended from Canaan — ought to be made slaves. Because Noah, at the period when he was not entirely free from faults of his own, declared that whosoever sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, an argument was drawn in support of capital punishment. The Bible has been set against astronomy, science, and almost every discovery of man, and yet the Bible lives. That is a proof of its inspiration. It has so much good in it that it cannot be put down by its own friends ; and there is nothing that has more occasion than the Bible to say, “ Save me from my friends.” But the Sermon on the Mount will never grow old ; the Lord’s Prayer rises to God every morning from the lips of infancy, and is chanted every day in the liturgies of nations ; and there is nothing in human thought or in human love which is not fed and strengthened and helped out of the Bible. And because we see that, we believe in it. But we do not believe that the Bible came down from heaven translated into the English, and printed, and having the proof corrected, and being bound up, and coming to us in that inspired form. We believe it was liable to mistakes all the way through ; that the men who wrote the Bible were not

infallible, though they were inspired ; that they saw some great truths and uttered them, and for the sake of those truths the Bible has lived and will live. But they were not free from mistakes. Consequently the Bible is a human book, only the best human book there is ; and the Bible being a human book, we can read it freely as we read any other human book ; and, if we find something we cannot understand, we may wait until we do understand it. If you find something that contradicts your moral sense, do not believe it ; set it aside. You need not say it is false, because, perhaps, you do not understand what it is and what it means ; but never accept any thing, if it is in the Bible, as true, which you cannot see to be true, and never accept any thing in the Bible to be good when it seems to be in contradiction to your moral sense ; and so using the Bible it will help you a thousand times more than if you make it a master and your mind its slave.

The faith of Unitarians enables them to believe more in all these ways. I do not say we do believe more than others, or that we have any more faith than others ; but we have the power. We can also believe more fully in sin and the evil of sin than if we accepted the common doctrines about sin. The common doctrines about sin are theological doctrines, and they have a theological and metaphysical sound. They do not seem to bear on human life or conduct. When we are told that sin came into the world by Adam ; and that through Adam we have become sinners ; and that the sin we committed is Adam's sin ; and that somehow or other Adam's sin is imputed to us ; and that we inherit from our federal head the guilt of sin ; and that somehow or other we are totally depraved, and yet are bound to do right, and are very sinful if we do wrong ; that we cannot do any thing of ourselves that is right, because no one ever does

or can, but nevertheless we are bound to do right,—when we are told these things, what is the effect on the mind as regards sin? The whole effect is to make a man think that sin is a sort of metaphysical thing with which he has not any thing to do,—except perhaps in church. But when we consider that sin is that which separates us from the divine truth and divine love; that sin is falsehood and that sin is selfishness; and that because God is true and God is love, then whenever we are selfish, and whenever we are false, we are separating ourselves from that divine friend, and plunging downward instead of going upward,—then we can understand the evil of sin.

Moreover, I think, as Unitarians, we can believe more in punishment, and not less than those who believe the theological doctrine. I do not believe in everlasting punishment, because it seems to me to be dishonorable to God. The doctrine of everlasting punishment, as it is held to-day, is, that man is sent into this world by his Maker in such a condition that he is capable of plunging himself into eternal ruin by what he can do in this world, so that he may reach a state in which he may be for ever and for ever a sufferer, without any power of reform or return. Now, there is not a man, I will not say a good man, I will not say a saint; but there is not a decent man, with decent human feelings, who would be willing to be accused of such a thing as is thus ascribed to the Almighty. It is one of the saddest things in the world that theology can so pervert the common human sense and human heart that we can ascribe to the Infinite blessedness and the Infinite love that which we should consider disgraceful, if performed by a human being. And, therefore, I say that we can believe more in punishment, and not less, when we see that punishment follows sin as its medicine intended for its cure; and that though there may be hells in the future life, as

well as heavens in the future life, hell below hell, and heaven above heaven, yet the hells as well as the heavens in the future world, if there are hells and heavens there, are all the angels of God, all ministers of his love, all sent for our good, all sent to bring us back to him ; and that there is no suffering inflicted upon any child in this or in any other world which is not intended to help or to save Believing this, we can believe in punishments hereafter as in punishments here, because we can believe in them and still believe in the perfect goodness of our Heavenly Father,— knowing that he has made us free and that he respects our freedom, and that he does not mean to make us good against our will here or anywhere else, but that he surrounds our evil with his infinite and perfect methods. Since Jesus has taught us in this world that we are to overcome evil with good, therefore that we *can* overcome the evil with good, then the Lord who sent Jesus into this world must have as much power as he attributes to us here ; and, with his infinite good, he must sooner or later overcome all evil. Feeling this, we can believe in punishment as a means of reform, and we can believe more in the glory and beauty of the gospel and in Jesus as the representative of good in this world, standing as the medium through whom God's love and light flow to us. We can believe more fully in it, if we believe that he helps us with that divine power which is able to save to the uttermost all who come to God through him in this world or in any other world. We do not believe that the sovereignty of God is such a limited sovereignty that after man's death God is not able to do any thing more to help him, but is shut out from his creature by the mere fact of his death, so that his love can no longer reach him. We do not believe that the sovereignty of God is a sovereignty which rules over one part of the universe, leaving the devil and his fiends and the sinners to have their own

way in another part of the universe. We believe that the sovereignty of God is that which shall extend through all worlds, and which shall redeem all worlds; a sovereignty whose power will never be balked by any thing which men or Satan can do, and which shall, in the end, cause every knee to bow and every tongue to confess that Jesus, regarded as the representation of truth and of love the manifestation of the divine beauty and glory, is the true Lord of the universe. So we can believe more in redeeming love, not less, since we believe it can extend to other worlds as well as to this.

Now I have shown you some of the reasons why I am a Unitarian. It is not because I wish to believe less in God, Christ, or religion, but because I wish to believe more; to have more faith in God, more faith in man, more faith in Christ, more faith in religion, more faith in the Bible, and more faith in the triumph of divine love. It seems to me that our views are more intelligible than those which have been so carefully arranged on the metaphysical anvils of the middle ages. Those were hammered out with a great deal of skill and a great deal of care, but they are mediæval doctrines, and they do not belong to the nineteenth century; they are an anachronism here at the present time. God has given to us all common sense, and when He speaks to us He speaks to our common sense. Christ rejoiced, not that his doctrines were mysterious, but that they were revelations; and he said, "I thank Thee, O Father, that Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent,"— who, probably, in those days as in these, were hemmed in and shut up by their metaphysical doctrines and theologies,— "that Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." That seems to me to be proof, so far as it goes, that the doctrine which is the most intelligible is likely to be the most true. The Unitarian doctrine is also the most

rational, because it does not demand of us to believe a contradiction. It is the one which opens a vaster future to mankind. It does not shut up Christ in any one belief, or in any one church, or any one party. Jesus said of himself, when Pilate asked him whether he was king, "Thou hast said it; I am king, and this is my royalty. For this thing was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth; and every one who is of the truth hears my voice, becomes my servant, belongs to me and I to him." Every true man belongs to Christ,—for Christ is the manifestation of good,—whether he knows it or does not know it. He may call himself a deist, he may call himself an infidel, he may call himself a Mohammedan, he may call himself a Brahmin; but if he loves the truth, and is following the truth, desiring to know it that he may do it; seeking to do good to his fellow-men; seeking to love the infinite beauty more and more,—then he belongs to Jesus, and he is a Christian without knowing it, and will be so accepted on the last day. If that is not so, then the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew does not contain the truth, because in that chapter Jesus himself tells us what shall be the judgment of the Gentiles. On that day shall the Gentiles be called before him, and then he shall say: "Come to my right; you belong to me." And they shall say, "We did not know we had done any good for you." He will say, "When I was hungry you fed me; when I was thirsty you gave me drink; when I was a stranger you took me in; when I was naked you clothed me." And they will say, "We were only doing it to our fellow-men." And he shall reply, "When you did it to them you did it to me." That is the royalty of Christ: that every thing that is good and true in this world is tending toward him, and that he is to reign until all truth and all good under his guidance and lead shall have conquered all the powers of

evil. Therefore we are Unitarians, because this doctrine seems to us to open a better future to the human race than any other. It is good to live by, and it is good to die by. It is certainly good to live by, because it shows us that this world is not the devil's world but God's world: that things here are good in their essence, tending toward good and toward God. If there is evil and sin around us here, it is that we shall fight with it, and struggle against it, and overcome it by the power of divine love. It is a good world to live in, no matter whether we suffer or whether we are joyful.

Unitarianism makes this a good world to live in, for it teaches that an infinitely good Being has made it for us, and an infinitely good Being has placed us here; and He is our providence, our shield, and our support evermore. It is a good religion, also, to die by. It is a good religion to die by, because it tells us it is a good thing to die: it is a good thing to die when death comes, and not a bad thing. Death is not the king of terrors to us. Death is a friend. Since God has sent death to all His creatures, just as He has sent life to all His creatures, death must be just as good, when it comes, as life while it remains. We believe in that infinite love which is just the same in the other world that it is here. We believe that the mercy of the Lord endureth for ever, and not merely for the seventy short years of human life. We believe that through all eternity, as through all time, we shall be surrounded by that divine grace, and wrapt in the arms of that blessed tenderness; and that so we are safe everywhere while we trust in God and lean on Him. And, as we find no little polyp in tropical seas, brought into being under the providence of God, without having a place arranged beforehand for its home, and having its food prepared for it beforehand, and all the conditions of life cared for carefully before it comes, we may be sure that when we, who are better than

they, as Jesus tells us, and nearer to God than they, pass on in His providence into the other world, there will be at least an equal care for us there, and an equal arrangement made for our reception there, and homes as good and suited to all the needs of our nature there as here. Christ said to his disciples, "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you." So natural it was that they should believe it, that if it were not so he would have told them; but he hardly thought it worth while to tell them, since it was so. "I go to prepare a place for you; and if I prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself." We see in these words the evidence that in the other life, as here in this, there will be homes prepared and made ready for us; that the friendships of this life shall not come to an end here. Jesus could not live in heaven unless he had his human friends to be with him there. He could not drink the cup of joy alone in the heavenly world. "I will come again to receive you unto myself, that where I am you may be also." If even that holy life required for its full satisfaction and completeness that its earthly love should be carried over there, and that he should not be separated from his earthly friends in the heavenly world, we may be sure that the same divine law will apply to us and those whom we love. And so we can feel safe and happy when the Lord calls us away, because we know it is the same infinite love which waits for us there which has surrounded us here; and that the same wonderful Providence which has arranged our human life will arrange our life in the heavenly beyond; and that the same sweet and tender affections which God has caused to spring up in our hearts below will be waiting for us also there.

These are the reasons, or some of them, my friends, for which I am ready still to call myself a Unitarian.

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FOURTH SERIES.]

[No. 29

CHRISTIANITY

AND

UNITARIANISM.

BY

HENRY BLANCHARD.



AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION,

BOSTON.

“ The object of the American Unitarian Association shall be to diffuse the knowledge and promote the interests of pure Christianity ; and all Unitarian Christians shall be invited to unite and co-operate with it for that purpose.”

—ARTICLE I. *of the By-Laws of the American Unitarian Association.*

CHRISTIANITY AND UNITARIANISM.

It is the purpose of this paper to show that Unitarianism is Christianity. How shall we know what the latter is? By studying the definition of the word as given by an authority. Such a one is Dr. Noah Webster; and in his dictionary these words appear: “Christianity is the religion of Christians; *the system of precepts and doctrines taught by Christ.*” I believe it to be wise to go to accepted standards, when we wish to define terms. If every man is at liberty to make his own definitions, it will not be possible to arrive at wise conclusions. Words often keep men apart in their statements, when they really are at one in their thought. Accepting this definition, we are to see how important is its limitation. Christianity is not the system of precepts and doctrines taught by John, or Peter, or Paul, or Moses, but the system of precepts and doctrines *taught by Christ.* The apostles, doubtless, taught much that Christ had taught them; but, when they added any thing, their addition, *according to the definition*, did not make a part of Christianity.

“But the Spirit was to lead the apostles into all truth,” says the reader. That declaration needs careful consideration. It would teach that the apostles were infallible. But they were not; for they taught

that Jesus would come again to earth in their own lifetime, and events have shown that they were mistaken.

Between the disciples and the Christ we are to make a clear distinction. He is our master, not they. What he taught is Christianity. Take an illustration. In the first chapter of John, we read : "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Let us admit, for the sake of argument, that the apostle John himself wrote these words, and believed them mightily. They are, nevertheless, no part of Christianity; for they are not of "the system of precepts and doctrines taught by Christ."

With this clear understanding, then, of the important limitation laid down,—not by Unitarians, though accepted by them most heartily, but by so great an authority in definition as Dr. Webster,—it is my hope to show that the precepts and doctrines of Christianity and Unitarianism are the same.

Where, then, do we find the teachings of Christ? Evidently in the four gospels. These record the words of Jesus Christ; and he who will study these will easily formulate the system of precepts and doctrines taught by Jesus Christ. And the first one in importance, though not the first in the order of time, is this: Jesus Christ was sent by God to be the saviour of men from sin.

Again and again the Great Teacher, in varying words sometimes, declares his mission: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly;" "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself;" "For I am from him, and he hath sent me,"—these declarations form the constant

undercurrent of all his words. God sent him — this was his doctrine — to bring men from the death of sin to the life of righteousness.

It follows, then, that he who is sent cannot be He who sends. A little boy, years ago, returning from church one day, said to his father: “Father, did you think the rector did right to-day, when he said, ‘Very God of very God, equal unto the Father,’ when Christ himself said, in the gospel the rector read, ‘My Father is greater than I’?”

The second doctrine Jesus taught was this: The God who sent him is the Father of all men, the evil as well as the good, and that, therefore, all men are brethren.

“If ye, then, *being evil*, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to those that ask him.” In the parable of the good Samaritan he taught that all men are neighbors, and, therefore, brethren. Now, this was a new doctrine. The Jew said, “Have we not all one Father?” but the “all” only meant Jews. They who were not Hebrews were not children of God. The Greek, the Roman, said, “Father of men;” but, to Greek and Roman, all men who were not of them were barbarians. Christ said, “All men are brethren, because God is the Father of all.” In the new knowledge of the present century concerning the sacred books of the nations, it has been found that many statements appear similar to, or identical with, those uttered by Christ. But I believe it can be shown, by the science of comparative theology, that Christ is the first teacher in history who taught that the Creator is the Father of all men, and that hence all men are brethren.

The next doctrine Jesus taught is this: That he came to establish the kingdom of God on this earth, and that this kingdom is the spiritual oneness of man with God.

Readers of the gospels will speedily notice the reticence of Christ about the hereafter. He assumes immortality. He feels sure that when men have laid hold of "eternal life" here in this world, they will not doubt about continued existence after death. "Because I live, ye shall live," he said; not "ye shall live, because I shall rise from the tomb." His eye, therefore, was turned to earth,—to the fields of Galilee, where men labored, and women loved, and children played; to the streets of Jerusalem, where the Pharisee made long prayers, and the Scribes were busy about the letter of the law. "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,"—this was the theme of his earnest preaching. By vivid parable, by earnest discourse, by manifestation of a loving, reverent soul, he strove to make men understand this kingdom, and enter at once into its blessed realm. The apostle Paul, in after time, declared: "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." That was only saying what Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount, in the story of the good Samaritan, in the prayer he offered for his disciples. Not where a city with streets of gold and gates of pearl awaited men did Jesus look, but here, where men needed love, and strength, and aspiration, and communion with God. The earth was to be the kingdom of God.

The next doctrine is this: Into this kingdom of God — this realm of the spirit in which men are at one with God — men enter by the gateway of the new birth. Nicodemus came to Jesus by night. To him the Teacher

taught the doctrine. He himself had passed through that gate. He entered the wilderness one who was to wrestle there with temptation. He came out of it a victor—a new man. In the wilderness he had been born again.

And all men can see this need of the new birth. There comes a time when men feel that they are born into a new earth, under a new heaven. They see God's presence as they did not before ; they behold the sublimity of duty ; they feel themselves heirs of immortality ; they long to make the earth better than it is ; they rejoice with exceeding great joy in the privilege of being co-workers with God. They can say, then, “Yes, we are indeed born again.” The doctrine of Jesus seems rational ; it accords with their own experience. They see that he did not try to frighten men by pictures of hell, by saying they must be washed in his blood in order to enter heaven. His desire was to quicken new life. His words were persuasive. His own life won men to the new life.

Another doctrine of Jesus was that men must use the reason which their heavenly Father had given them. “Why even of your own selves judge ye not what is right?” That was a stirring question. The Scribes said, “Hear Moses only ; hear our interpretations only.” Jesus said, in effect, “Think for yourselves ;” and all his ministry was an illustration of his doctrine. “I am come,” he said, “that I might preach.”* Now, preaching is to persuade ; and, as the preacher went about, one sees how he relies on the reasonableness of his words and the responsive reasonableness of his hearers. Miracles are chiefly incidents. They show his sympathy

* Mark i. 38.

with sickness and sorrow. He does not want men to accept him because he works wonders, but because he gives them "the word of the kingdom."

Oh, how gracious are his words! Full of grace and truth, indeed, he was; and, as he converses with the woman at the well in Samaria, saying, "God is spirit, and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth;" or to his disciples, says, "My judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me,"—we who read the words to-day feel how much he delighted in the reasonableness of his doctrine, and expected reasonableness in those to whom he spoke.

I do not undertake to formulate all the doctrines of Jesus, but to give the essential ones. I must add one more, at least, in order to give the substance of his teaching. It is that between the evil and the good there is an awful gulf. He does not dwell as much on the results of his mission—the final turning towards him of all men, and, through him, towards God—"And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me"—as he does on the sin of the world from which he was sent to be the saviour. The end was to be glorious; but the intervening wickedness was awful. He was a man of sorrows, because of the evil in the world. He was far more than this, but he was this. The sin of the world burdened his soul. He wanted to save men from it. He foretold punishment,—never endless, but terrible. All his figures of speech were to show the terribleness, not the duration, of punishment. And to this statement Dr. Noah Porter, President of Yale College, agrees. To a soul like Jesus', men's hypocrisy, greed, pride, lust, must have been fearful. To his

thought, sinners were dead men. They only were alive who were at one with God, who loved God and man. And so, by parables,—of “The Rich Man and Lazarus,” and “The Prodigal Son,” and “The Sheep and the Goats;” by figures of speech,—of the worm that dieth not and the fire that never goes out,—he tried to make men feel the awfulness of sin, the great gulf between the evil and the good.

But the sins were not errors of opinion. It was not disbelief in the Trinity, nor in vicarious atonement,—for he never taught these,—but it was the deed of unkindness, the lying word, the covetous heart, he condemned. It was even the *not* feeding the poor or clothing the naked that sent men to spiritual death.

Jesus Christ, therefore, never made light of sin or punishment. He always wanted men to feel how far off from God and the good they were who walked in the ways of sin.

These doctrines, I believe, make up the substance of those announced by Christ. His precepts I do not attempt to enumerate. They are in accord with his doctrines. “Forgive your enemies; love the unlovely, just as they are; pray frequently; strive for perfection;”—these are some of his divine commands. We find no doctrine of a triune God; of a sinless Saviour receiving the punishment due to a guilty world; of a nature totally depraved; of the majority doomed to everlasting woe. Not being among his doctrines, then, according to Dr. Webster’s definition, they make no part of Christianity.

I beg my reader to ponder these words. If true, they are of vast importance to the world’s welfare. Use the reason God has given you. Search the gospels.

See what Christ taught. Believe that only what he taught is real Christianity.

Let us now see what Unitarianism is. Dr. Webster declares that "it is the doctrines of Unitarians." How shall we find out what these doctrines are? By reading the books of the representative writers, and by studying the votes of the National Conference.

It is affirmed by many that there is no common belief among Unitarians. This is a very great mistake. There is as much unanimity of opinion among these Christians as among any other body of disciples. No one man has any right to define the doctrines any more than any one man, who is not a lexicographer, has a right to define Christianity. The majority must decide. The leaders must represent. Now, if any one will read the writings of Dr. Channing, Dr. Dewey, Dr. Hedge, Dr. Clarke, Dr. Furness, Dr. Bellows, Rev. E. E. Hale, Dr. C. C. Everett, Rev. J. F. W. Ware and others, he will speedily see that they announce certain doctrines as being the doctrines of Unitarianism. *They include every one which has been declared in this tract to be a doctrine taught by Jesus Christ.*

They all say Jesus Christ was sent by God to be the world's saviour from sin. They all say God is the Father of all men, and all men are brethren. They all say that Jesus came to establish God's kingdom in the souls of men here on earth; that entrance to this kingdom is by a new life of thought, and reverence, and love for God and man; that Jesus speaks to men's reason, and asks them to judge for themselves; that he speaks with authority, but with the authority of one who knows the truth of what he says; that the evil and the good are widely and fearfully separated; but that He who

punishes to improve man, and not to satisfy vengeance, will at last bring every prodigal home. They say with Tennyson : —

“ I can but trust that good shall fall
At last, far off, at last to all,
And every winter change to spring.

“ That God that ever lives and loves.
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off, divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.”

I hope, therefore, that the tracts and books of Unitarians will be widely and earnestly read. They are not as much known as they ought to be. They will amply repay thoughtful readers. I ask the reader of this tract to seek these books. Christianity has long been misrepresented. Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Edwards — all of them good and great men — have come between men and Christ. I long to have men see Jesus as the gospels show him. When they do, they will love him, and honor him, and try to follow him. And when they compare his teachings with those of Unitarians, they will find that Unitarianism and Christianity are one.

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THE

UNPARDONABLE SIN.

BY

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AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION

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THE American Unitarian Association is the working missionary organization of the Unitarian churches of America. It seeks to promote sympathy and united action among Liberal Christians, and to spread the principles which are believed by Unitarians to be essential to civil and religious liberty and progress and to the attainments of the spiritual life. To this end it supports missionaries, establishes and maintains churches, holds conventions, aids in building meeting-houses, publishes, sells, and gives away books, sermons, tracts, hymn-books, and devotional works.

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THE UNPARDONABLE SIN.

"All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men : but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him : but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." — *Matthew xii. 31, 32.*

THOUGH the meaning of this passage, as it should be read, and where it stands, is in perfect harmony with the loving spirit of our Saviour and his gospel, when taken out of its connection and mistranslated, it has a very different signification. The unpardonable sin has held a large space on the night-side of Christian theology. Many have been the conjectures as to what form of sin it designates ; many have been the morbid consciences that have accused themselves of it ; and — what is very sad — it is the most blameless persons, often, like the poet Cowper, the most tenderly devout and the most scrupulously conscientious, that have suffered from this dread. The whole tenor of our Saviour's teachings, equally with our assurance of the Divine fatherhood, would lead us to believe that there is no unpardonable sin, — that the mercy of God leaves not the most depraved of his children out of its pale ; while, on the other hand, the sin really referred to in the passage under consideration is too common to draw down severe condemnation from human censors, but, at the same time, so perilous as to demand, on the part of every one, the most earnest and resolute watchfulness against it.

In our translation of the Bible the peremptory word *shall* is used to represent the simple future, and rightly; for, when the translation was made, *shall* meant no more than *will* means now. But there is nothing in this passage that corresponds with the present meaning of *shall*. The sense of the words rendered *shall not be forgiven* might be best conveyed by the phrase *is inexcusable*, or *is unpardonable*, by which is meant, not that the offender is beyond the reach of forgiveness or mercy, but that the offence is one which admits of no apology or palliation.

Moreover, *neither in this world, neither in the world to come*, is a mistranslation. The rendering should be, *neither in this age, nor in that to come*, that is, neither now nor at any future time.

Let us now look at the occasion on which these words were spoken. Jesus had performed works of power and love in which it might have seemed that beholders could not but recognize the hand of God, the outgoings of infinite mercy. The Pharisees, who could not deny facts patent to the knowledge of all around them, sneered malignantly at these ministries of tenderness and compassion, and ascribed them to the agency of Satan. Jesus says in reply: "I claim nothing on my own behalf. I may be misunderstood and misrepresented; but such errors are excusable, sometimes inevitable. But when one is brought, as it were, face to face with what is indubitably divine and can bear no other interpretation, with unmixed and resplendent goodness and mercy, and calls that Satanic, reviles it, jeers at it, such depraved perversity is inexcusable, without apology; and not only so now, in connection with what I have done, but equally so in all coming time, and under whatever manifestations of the Divine may be thus blasphemed." Such I conceive to be the obvious sense of the words of Jesus on this occasion. They by no means preclude the sinner from the possibil-

ity of repentance and forgiveness. They barely stamp his sin with the brand of pre-eminent depravity which manifestly belongs to it, attaching to it the intensest significance which we are wont popularly to give to such words as *unpardonable* and *inexcusable*, which are used, not in their absolute, exclusive sense, but as conveying the strongest expression by which we can designate the heinousness of any sin. That I have rightly defined the occasion for the utterance of these words and the sin to which they point, will appear from the explanation given by the Evangelist Mark: "Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit."

Let us now consider what lessons these words have for us.

They have, in the first place, a lesson of charity. "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him." No sincere believer in Christ can think lightly or complacently of unbelief in him, or can regard it as otherwise than pitiable, lamentable. It shuts out the only surely guiding light on our life-path in this world,—the only rays that shine with unflickering lustre on the life beyond death. It may have its origin in what is fitly termed "an evil heart of unbelief,"—in a willingness to be released from the moral restraints and obligations which Christianity imposes; and in that case it admits of no defence or apology. But where Christianity has been obscured, travestied, misrepresented, in those who should have been its exponents and exemplars, betrayed in the house of its professed friends, the honest heart, the potentially religious spirit has often found its rightful utterance in denial; and many are they who would have accepted the actual gospel with humble gratitude, and would have done the lowliest homage to the real Christ, who have arrayed themselves among the avowed enemies and opposers of the faith. When the emperor

of China expelled Christians from his dominions, saying, "Wherever these Christians come they whiten the soil with dead men's bones," in these bitter "words against the Son of man" he came much nearer to the heart of Jesus than ever have the (so-called) Christian potentates who have sacrificed human hecatombs to the lust of power and territory. So too, when the Chinese strove to rid themselves of the degrading curse of the opium traffic, they, without knowing it, and while holding, no doubt, the very name of Christ in utter loathing, were immeasurably more Christian than the nation priding itself on its established church, and its world-wide missionary operations, which essayed to force the deadly poison on those poor heathen at the point of the bayonet. Nor can the sacred name of the world's Redeemer receive other than indignant and honest blasphemy, nor infidelity reap a scanty harvest, from the recent vote of almost all the English bishops in support of the needless and aggressive Afghan war; and from the apology for the sacred college issued by one of their number, in which he says that the advancement of Christ's kingdom depends on England's maintaining, at all events and by whatever means, her supremacy of physical force in the East. So long as Christendom propagates its vices faster than it can carry its religion, it will force from the unbaptized nations "words against the Son of man," which he will not only forgive, but accept as a virtual tribute to his honor and attestation of the truth of his gospel.

Equally in (so-called) Christian countries, where the church has been prevailingly corrupt in morals, or absurd in dogma, or materialistic in the fetich-worship of exterior forms, there have always been pure, wise, lofty spirits that have justly looked down with contempt, or at best with supercilious tolerance, on the Christianity incarnate before and around them, and have not thought it

worth their pains to inquire how nearly it reproduced the evangelic pattern.

There have also been many conspicuous instances of men of genius and culture, whose early surroundings — though not in a spiritually benighted community — have been such as to create, prior to knowledge or the possibility of knowledge, an intense prejudice against our religion, whose unbelief has been loyal to the principles and spirit of the Saviour whose name they have disowned, perhaps despised. John Stuart Mill, in his Autobiography, tells us that he was educated to regard the falsity of religion and of all religions as a virtual axiom, a proposition admitting of neither dispute nor question; yet, while identified throughout his life with the enemies of the Christian name, during all his later years he was gravitating toward the principles of which Christ is the exponent; and could he have taken a fresh start in life, he would not improbably have been loyal to the sacred name which he had been trained to hold in the vilest esteem.

Even among those who have devoted themselves to the propagandism of unbelief, while there have been many whose coarse and low moral natures would have been weighty arguments in favor of whatever they despised, there have been others, like William Greg, who have drawn largely and richly from the very fountains of Solyma, and have paraded as outside of and repugnant to Christianity sentiments which, through whatever channels transmitted, were derived from the heart and the lips of Christ.

In fine, our Saviour, in the words under consideration, would bid us regard unbelief, when neither springing from nor issuing in moral depravity, as venial. Indeed it specially behooves us Christians so to regard it; for, were it blameworthy, who shall say where the blame

lies,—whether the Christian church is not mainly answerable for it? Were Christians in general, were those who would be indignant at not being called representative Christians, were those who occupy recognized, prominent, official stations in the church, in heart, speech, and life, all that they profess to be, the close followers of Him whose disciples they term themselves, infidelity would be rarer than idiocy or insanity. Among those who have spoken “against the Son of man” because he has been so meanly represented in his church, there are, I cannot but think, a goodly number who will wake from the death-slumber to behold in him the realized ideal of what they had most cherished, loved, and worshipped. It is, indeed, very largely by the sins which Christ pronounces inexcusable, that have defaced and disfigured his church, that the opposing camp has been maintained and recruited.

What is it that Jesus declares to be unpardonable always, in all time, then when he is speaking, and ever after? It is falsity, willing sophistry, perversity of judgment about moral distinctions, the confounding of right and wrong, deeming good evil and evil good. The case in hand is but a single specimen, yet clearly illustrative of its kind. Here were benefits bestowed, which bore their character on their face, works which could by no possibility have been other than works of love; and these Pharisees called them Satanic, infernal. But they were honest in saying so. They thought so. Very true, and so much the worse for them, as it indicated a moral nature awry, deranged, and diseased; and this could have come only from previous guilt. For men never thus mis-judge, unless they have first misdone. Men never approve any sins but their own, or the near kindred of their own, and never malign any form of goodness from which they have not first alienated themselves in conduct and character. Moreover, this misjudging implies not only

misdoing, but habitual, inveterate misdoing. Men at the outset of an evil career still judge aright, approve the things that are excellent, and condemn themselves in those things that they allow. It is only when in no other way they can escape utter self-contempt, that they baptize evil with fair and holy names, and cast scorn on goodness. That this was the case with the Pharisees we may learn from such traits as are implied in the charge, "Who devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers;" in what is said about their cleansing the outside of the platter, while it is full of extortion, of what has been wrested by craft or force from its owners; and notably, in the pious fraud by which they diverted through a fictitious consecration the subsidies which should have been applied to the relief of their needy parents. Men who had been forced to reconcile such vile practices with their position as the religious leaders of the people, could not retain a sound moral judgment. No wonder that they had a much more realizing faith in Beelzebub than in God, and that they were ready to deem what was most divine most devilish.

Now it is precisely such persons as the Pharisees who are at all times liable to this unpardonable sin. It cleaves chiefly to men who take the stand and make the profession of superior goodness. It is not the sin of the openly and notoriously depraved. They know what they are, and do not pretend to call their evil by any but its true name. The publican in the parable does not term himself any thing else than a sinner. But it has always been the tendency of self-styled good men, religious men, to canonize the sins which they were unwilling to renounce, the evils which they were loath to purge away, the wrongs which they did not wish to have righted. The Christian church has involved itself largely in this guilt, as regards both individual sins and public evils. To how lamenta-

ble an extent, in private and in public, have resentment and retaliation, in numerous forms, from great national wars down to the most pitiful quarrels between neighbors and kinsfolk, been regarded and treated as duties and virtues! How has the love of gain, with the meanest ways of making and hoarding it, stood, like the abomination of desolation, in what, but for this defilement, were the holiest of places! What was the age-long defence of slavery by Christian lips and pens, but the self-justification of Christendom for lucrative guilt, which, because lucrative, Christians were unwilling to abandon? How many have been the customs and habits utterly opposed to the precepts and spirit of Christ and his gospel, which have held undisturbed dominion in the church, because they were in such beautiful harmony with "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life!" To be sure, the approval has, in all these cases, been in a certain fashion sincere, because conformity and complicity prepared the way for approval; but the very men who have thus approved, could they have taken their stand outside of the current of opinion and practice on which they have floated, would have been foremost in condemning what they have justified and glorified. It is sins of this class, it is the low standard of duty and virtue among Christians, that has to so large a degree presented Christianity in the concrete as widely alien from the Christianity of Christ, and has thus generated doubt, unbelief, blasphemy against the Son of man, not infrequently in the very name of goodness, in the interest of the very virtues which have their inmost shrine in the gospel, of the very reforms which had their native and natural home in the bosom of the church, and in which truly Christ-like Christians have been the pioneers.

The sin against the Holy Spirit, we thus see, is not one of which the tenderly conscientious, such as have trem-

bled at the very thought of it, are capable ; but of which all who are less than tenderly conscientious are capable. The sin is ours, when we obliterate any moral distinction, first in conduct and character, and then in thought, feeling, belief, and profession ; when we suffer ourselves to fall into any bad habit, and then deem and call it good ; when we omit from motives of self-indulgence, or for human fear or favor, any duty, or the advocacy of any right and worthy cause, and then, to save our own self-esteem, disown the duty or cast obloquy on the cause. The sin is ours, when we adopt as adequate and final our own standard of right, if it be at variance with the absolute right ; when we sincerely think ourselves as good as we ought to be, while there is still a broad discrepancy between our measure of goodness and the exemplar which in our professions and prayers we own to be supreme and perfect.

The sin against the Holy Spirit is not and cannot be ours, when, however faulty we are, we see and know what we ought to be, humble ourselves before God for our imperfections and shortcomings, and earnestly strive for higher attainments in goodness, for a purer heart and a holier life.

Unpardonable, says our Saviour, is this sin against the Holy Spirit, this calling evil good and good evil. Unpardonable it must needs be, while it lasts. It cannot subsist and be forgiven ; for forgiveness is but another name for the Divine approval, and though that approval rests on the chief of sinners the moment he repents and craves the goodness of which he knows himself destitute, it cannot rest on those who cloak sin under fair names and pretences. Would they be forgiven, they must reverse the whole process. They must see themselves as God sees them. They must account as evil that which is evil in his sight, that only as good which is in

accordance with his pure commandment and holy will. This commandment, this will, is embodied for us in Christ, the all-perfect, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." If we revere him as the representative of perfect humanity, it remains for us to bring our moral judgments to his standard, to behold ourselves as mirrored in his character, and to regard conduct, habit, word, or deed as right or wrong in proportion as it accords with or deflects from what we see in him.

Let us above all things beware of false moral judgments. The sins which we know and yet commit are, indeed, perilous, and demand to be repented and forsaken before habit finds them upon us, and we exclaim in despair, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But even greater is our danger from the sins which we approve or justify; for they betoken bad habits — if not of word and deed, yet of thought and feeling — already formed and fastened — God grant it be not irrevocably — by false estimates, depraved judgment, perverted conscience, — by the voice within which says, "Evil, be thou my good."

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